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VIETNAMIZATION AND REDEPLOYMENT

1970-1971

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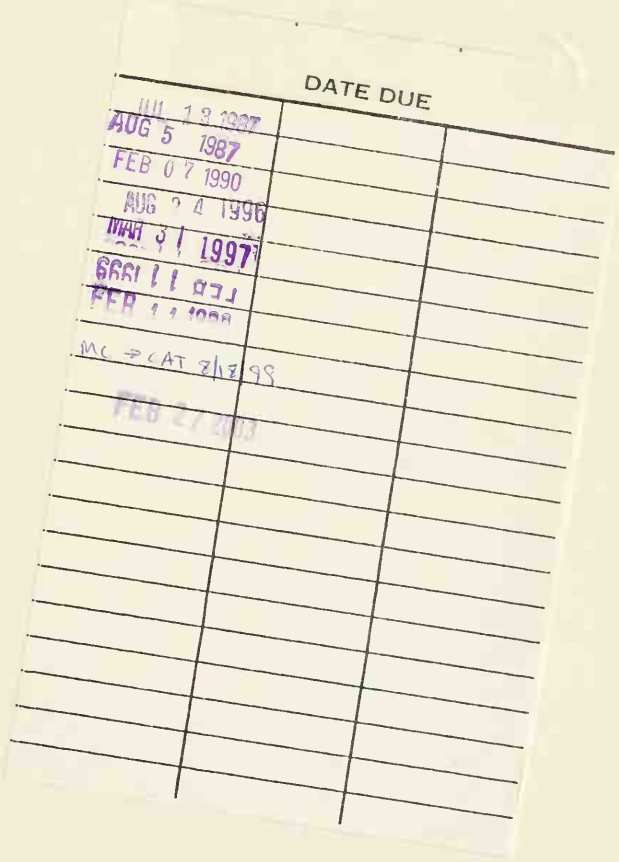

U.S. MARINES IN VIETNAM

VIETNAMIZATION AND REDEPLOYMENT

1970-1971

by
Graham A. Cosmas
and
Lieutenant Colonel Terrence P. Murray, USMC

Edited by
Major William R. Melton, USMC
and
Jack Shulimson

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Foreword

This is the eighth volume in a planned 10-volume operational and chronological series covering the Marine Corps' participation in the Vietnam War. A separate topical series will complement the operational histories. This particular volume details the gradual withdrawal in 1970-1971 of Marine combat forces from South Vietnam's northernmost corps area, I Corps, as part of an overall American strategy of turning the ground war against the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong over to the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam.

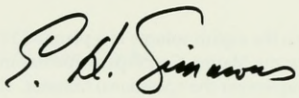
Marines in this period accomplished a number of difficult tasks. The III Marine Amphibious Force transferred most of its responsibilities in I Corps to the Army XXIV Corps, which became the senior U.S. command in that military region. III MAF continued a full range of military and pacification activities within Quang Nam Province, its remaining area of responsibility. Developing its combat and counterinsurgency techniques to their fullest extent, the force continued to protect the city of Da Nang, root out the enemy guerrillas and infrastructure from the country, and prevent enemy main forces from disrupting pacification. At the same time, its strength steadily diminished as Marines redeployed in a series of increments until, in April 1971, the III Marine Amphibious Force Headquarters itself departed and was replaced for the last month of Marine ground combat by the 3d Marine Amphibious Brigade. During the redeployments, Marine logisticians successfully withdrew huge quantities of equipment and dismantled installations or turned them over to the South Vietnamese. Yet this was also a time of troubles for Marines. The strains on the Armed Services of a lengthy, inconclusive war and the social and racial conflicts tormenting American society adversely affected Marine discipline and cohesion, posing complex, intractable problems of leadership and command. Marines departed Vietnam with a sense that they had done their duty, but also that they were leaving behind many problems unsolved and tasks not completed.

Although written from the perspective of III MAF and the ground war in I Corps, the volume treats the activities of Marine advisors to the South Vietnamese Armed Forces, the Seventh Fleet Special Landing Force, and Marines on the staff of the U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, in Saigon. There are separate chapters on Marine air, artillery, and logistics. An attempt has been made to place the Marine role in relation to the overall effort.

Dr. Graham A. Cosmas was with the History and Museums Division from December 1973 through April 1979 and is now on the staff of the U.S. Army's Center of Military History. Previously, he had taught at the University of Texas and the University of Guam. He is a graduate of Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, and received his doctorate in history from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in 1969. Dr. Cosmas has published several articles on military history and *An Army for Empire: The United States Army in the Spanish-American War* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1971) and is co-author of *Marines in the Dominican Republic, 1916-1924* (Washington: Hist&MusDiv, HQMC, 1975).

The co-author, Lieutenant Colonel Terrence P. Murray, served with the History and Museums Division from August 1983 until July 1984. He is a graduate of the U.S. Naval

Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, and of the Armed Forces Staff College. Lieutenant Colonel Murray served a combat tour in Vietnam as an infantry officer during 1969 and 1970. He is now assigned to the Navy-Marine Corps Senate Liaison Office in Washington, D.C.



E. H. SIMMONS
Brigadier General, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret)
Director of Marine Corps History and Museums

Preface

U.S. Marines in Vietnam: Vietnamization and Redeployment, 1970-1971, is largely based on the holdings of the Marine Corps Historical Center. These include the official unit monthly command chronologies, Marine Corps messages and journal files, the Oral History and Personal Papers Collections of the History and Museums Division, and the reference files of the division.

The authors have supplemented the above sources with research in the records of the other Services and pertinent published primary and secondary sources. Although none of the information in this history is classified, some of the documentation on which it is based still has a classified designation. More than 250 reviewers, most of whom participated in the events depicted in the history, read a comment edition of the manuscript. Their comments, where applicable, have been incorporated into the text. A list of those who commented is included in the appendices. All ranks used in the body of the text are those held by the individual in 1970-1971.

The production of this volume, like its predecessors, has been a cooperative effort. Dr. Graham A. Cosmas researched and wrote the first draft of the history with the exception of the last chapter. Lieutenant Colonel Terrence P. Murray completed the revision of the manuscript and incorporated the comments, assisted by Major William R. Melton. Mr. Jack Shulimson, Head, Histories Section and Senior Vietnam Historian, edited the final version and prepared the volume for publication. All of the Vietnam historians, past and present, in the Histories Section, History and Museums Division, especially Mr. Shulimson and Mr. Charles R. Smith, and former members Lieutenant Colonel Lane Rogers, Lieutenant Colonel Gary Parker, and Lieutenant Colonel David Buckner, reviewed the draft manuscript and provided invaluable comments and criticism.

Access to Marine Corps documents was facilitated by Mrs. Joyce Bonnett of the division's Archives Section. Miss Evelyn Englander, head librarian, and her assistant, Mrs. Pat Morgan, were most helpful in obtaining needed references. The Reference Section, headed by Danny J. Crawford, made its files available and answered numerous queries cheerfully and professionally. Mrs. Regina Strother of the Reference Section assisted in photographic research. The Head, Oral Histories Section, Mr. Benis M. Frank, was equally supportive in making his collection available.

Mr. Frank prepared the index with the assistance of Mr. Smith and Major Arthur F. Elzy, both of the Histories Section.

Mr. Robert E. Struder, head of Publications Production Section, adeptly guided the manuscript through the various production phases. Maps were produced by Mr. W. Stephen Hill, who also contributed the design and makeup of the book. The manuscript was typeset first for the comment edition by Corporals Paul W. Gibson, Joseph J. Hynes, and Mark J. Zigante. Corporals Stanley W. Crowl and James W. Rodriguez II, with the guidance and substantial additional contribution of Mrs. Catherine A. Kerns, accomplished the final typesetting.

Special thanks are due Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, Director of Marine Corps History and Museums, who established the guidelines for the Vietnam series and made available to the author his personal notebooks for 1970-1971, when he was assistant division commander of the 1st Marine Division and assistant brigade commander of the 3d Marine Amphibious Brigade; Colonels John E. Greenwood, Jr., Oliver M. Whipple, Jr.,

and John G. Miller, successively the History and Museum Division's Deputy Directors for History, who provided continuing support; and Mr. Henry I. Shaw, Jr., Chief Historian, who provided the benefit of long experience in writing Marine Corps history, as well as encouragement, wise counsel, and general editorial direction.

The authors also are indebted to their colleagues in the historical offices of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, who freely exchanged information and made documents available for their examination.

They must express their gratitude also to all those who reviewed the comment edition and provided corrections, personal photographs, and insight available only to those who took part in the events. In the end, however, the authors alone are responsible for the contents of the text, including opinions expressed and any errors in fact.

Graham A. Cosmas

GRAHAM A. COSMAS

Terrence P. Murray

TERRENCE P. MURRAY

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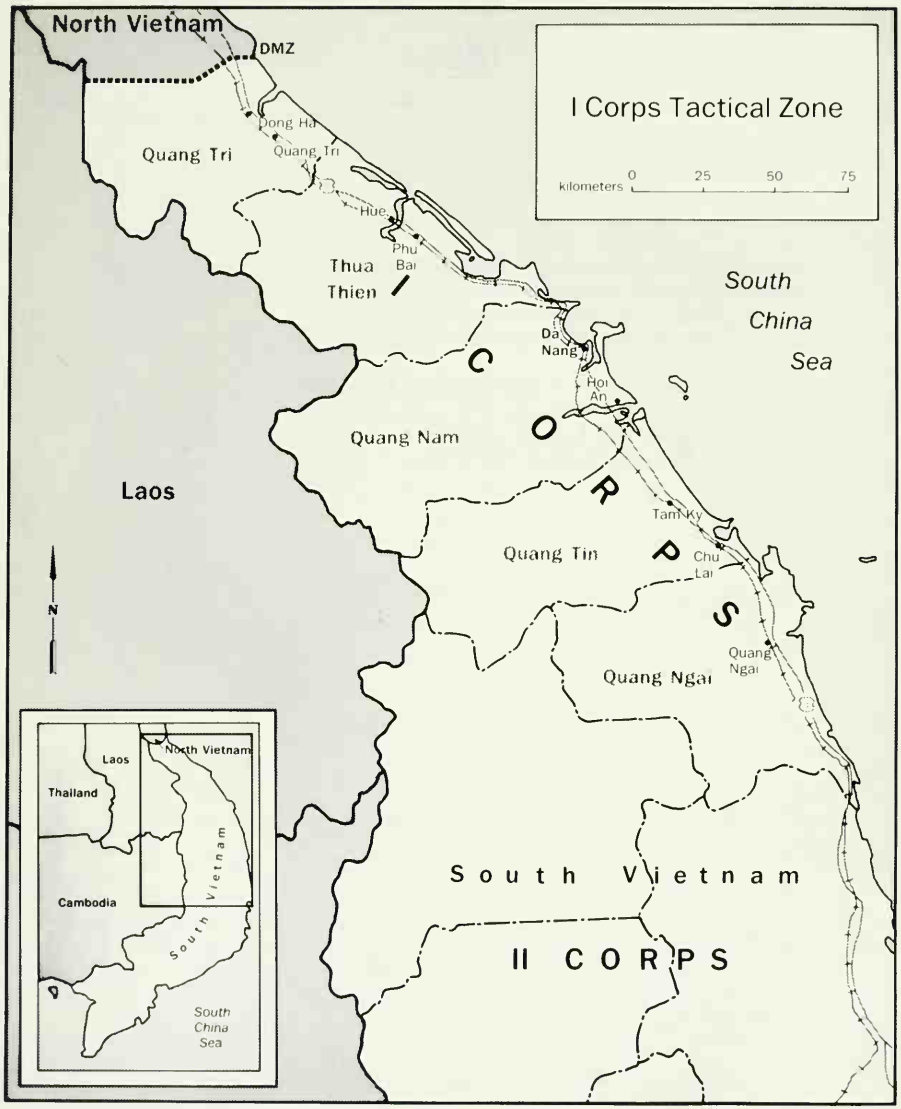

North Vietnam
DMZ
I Corps Tactical Zone
kilometers 0 25 50 75
Dong Ha
Quang Tri
Quang Tri
Hue
Phu Bai
Thua Thien
South China Sea
Da Nang
Hoi An
C O R P S
Quang Nam
Laos
Tam Ky
Quang Tin
Chu Lai
Quang Ngai
Quang Ngai
N
Laos
North Vietnam
Thailand
Cambodia
South Vietnam
South China Sea
South Vietnam
II CORPS

PART I
A CONTRACTING WAR

CHAPTER 1

The War in I Corps, Early 1970

III MAF in January 1970—Allied and Enemy Strategy, 1969-1970
The III MAF/ICTZ Combined Plan for 1970—Troop Redeployment: Keystone Bluejay
The Change of Command in I Corps

III MAF in January 1970

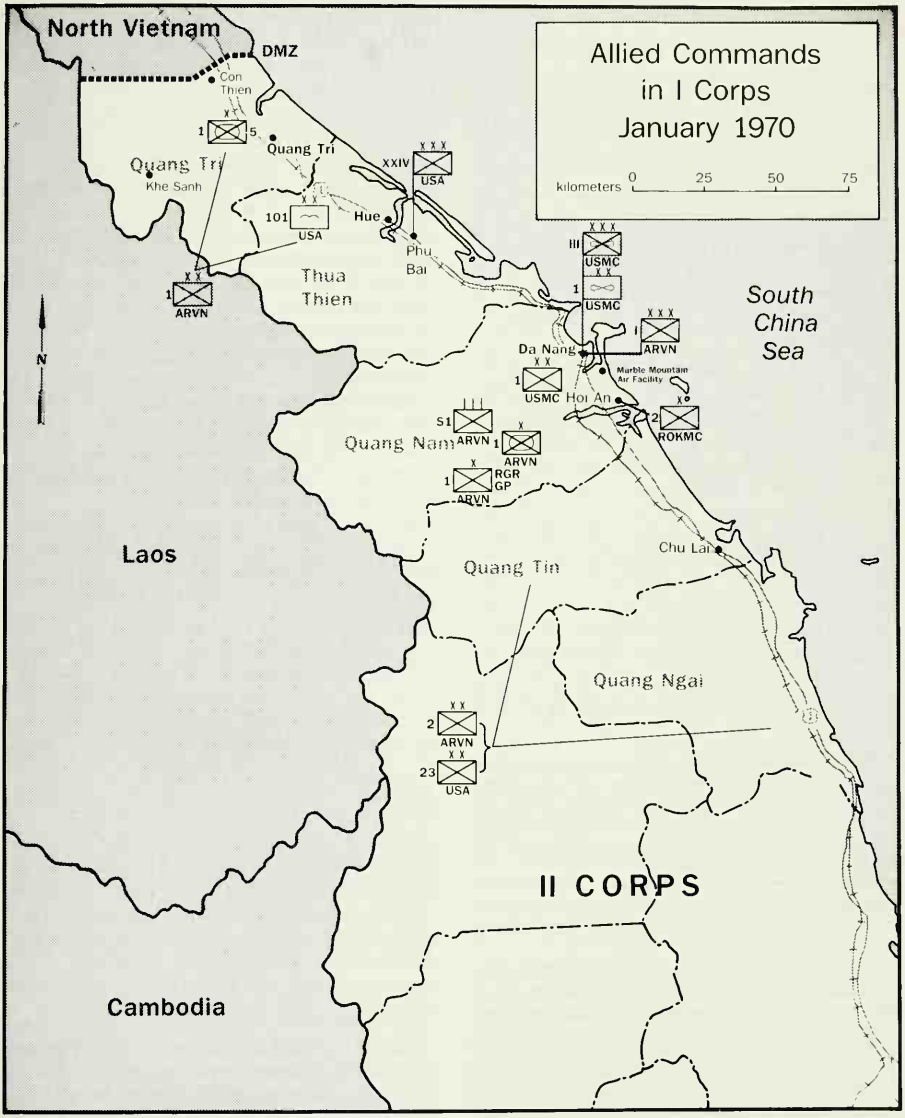
In January 1970, the III Marine Amphibious Force (III MAF) was responsible for defense of the five northernmost provinces of South Vietnam. Constituting I Corps Tactical Zone (I CTZ), these provinces were from north to south Quang Tri, Thua Thien, Quang Nam, Quang Tin, and Quang Ngai. Marines had operated in these provinces since 1965 and had taken a valiant and costly part in some of the war's heaviest fighting, including the sieges of Con Thien and Khe Sanh and the house-to-house battle of Hue City. By early 1970, Marine operations were focused on the Da Nang tactical area of responsibility (TAOR) where large-scale combat had become infrequent, although the enemy constantly engaged the troops of III MAF in an unspectacular but deadly war of ambushes, small skirmishes, rocket and mortar attacks and boobytraps. These latter devices inflicted the most ravaging toll upon Marines in terms of casualties.

At the beginning of 1970, Lieutenant General Herman Nickerson, Jr., commanded III MAF, which included about 55,000 Marines. The previous January, before redeployment began, III MAF numbered over 79,000. Major General Edwin B. Wheeler's reinforced 1st Marine Division, 28,000 strong, had its headquarters just outside Da Nang and operated in Quang Nam Province. The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (1st MAW)—12,000 men with over 400 aircraft under Major General William G. Thrash—had fixed-wing squadrons flying from fields at Da Nang, Chu Lai, and Phu Bai and helicopter squadrons stationed at Marble Mountain east of Da Nang and at Phu Bai. At Da Nang, the 7,600 officers and men of Brigadier General Mauro J. Padalino's Force Logistic Command (FLC) supplied the division and wing and kept their equipment operating. Scattered in platoon-size detachments throughout the villages of I CTZ, the 2,000 officers and men of the Combined Action Force (CAF) under Colonel Theodore E. Metzger continued the Marines' most ambitious experiment in pacification.[1]

Besides the Marines, III MAF included about 50,000 United States Army troops. In Quang Tri Province, the 6,000 officers and men of Army Brigadier General William A. Burke's 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) helped guard the invasion and infiltration routes across the Demilitarized Zone. In Thua Thien just to the south, the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), commanded by Major General John M. Wright, USA, deployed 20,800 men in three brigades to protect Hue. These two Army formations, which had moved into I Corps early in 1968 to counter the enemy's Tet offensive, constituted the XXIV Corps, commanded by Lieutenant General Melvin Zais, USA. Located at Phu Bai, Zais' headquarters was under the operational control of III MAF. In Quang Tin and Quang Ngai Provinces in southern I Corps, the 23,800 troops of the 23d (Americal) Division, commanded by Major General Lloyd B. Ramsey, USA, operated under III MAF's direct control from their headquarters in Chu Lai. General Nickerson, in his capacity as senior U.S. advisor to I Corps, also commanded the 222 officers and 305 enlisted men of the U. S. Army Advisory Group (USAAG) in I Corps.[2]

A civilian deputy for Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) was also a member of the III MAF staff and was charged with coordinating through his province and district representatives U.S. civilian and military resources which directly supported the pacification program in I Corps. Formed under the single manager concept and directly controlled by MACV, CORDS was created in an effort to integrate totally country-wide pacification.

I Corps also had operating within it important allied contingents which were neither attached to nor controlled by III MAF. About 28,000 U. S. Army, Navy, and Air Force personnel were stationed in I Corps with the Naval Support Activity (NSA), Da Nang; the U. S. Army Support Command, Da Nang; the 45th Army Engineering Group; and the Air Force's 366th Tactical Fighter Wing. While these organizations cooperated closely with III MAF for many purposes, they were directed by their service component commanders. III MAF did not control but did supervise the operations of the 6,000-man 2d Republic of Korea Marine Brigade, which protected an enclave


Allied Commands
in I Corps
January 1970
kilometers 0 25 50 75
North Vietnam
DMZ
Con Thien
1 5
Quang Tri
Khe Sanh
XXIV USA
101 USA
Hue
Phu Bai
Thua Thien
1 ARVN
III USMC
1 USMC
I ARVN
Da Nang
Marble Mountain Air Facility
1 USMC
Hoi An
2 ROKMC
South China Sea
N
S1 ARVN
1 ARVN
1 RGR GP ARVN
Quang Nam
Laos
Chu Lai
Quang Tin
Quang Ngai
2 ARVN
23 USA
II CORPS
Cambodia

south of Da Nang carved out of the 1st Marine Division's territory.[3]

In I CTZ, as elsewhere in South Vietnam, the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) and its local and regional militia were gradually assuming a larger share of the fighting. The Vietnamese commander of I Corps,* Lieutenant General Hoan Xuan Lam, controlled a force which included about 41,000 ARVN regulars. His corps included two divisions—the 1st stationed in Quang Tri and Thua Thien and the 2d in Quang Tin and Quang Ngai. An independent regiment, the 51st, and the 1st Armored Brigade operated in Quang Nam to protect Da Nang while the 1st Ranger Group, normally located near Da Nang, acted as corps reserve.

Reinforcing the regulars, 65,000 troops of the Regional Forces and Popular Forces (RFs and PFs) and about 80,000 members of the newly organized part-time People's Self-Defense Force (PSDF) were available to combat small guerrilla bands and root out the Viet Cong political underground.** Some 5,300 men of the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDGs), recruited and trained by the South Vietnamese Special Forces and advised and assisted by the U. S. Army's Company C, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), occupied camps deep in the mountains. The CIDGs collected information about enemy activities and tried to block infiltration into the lowlands.[4]

From III MAF Headquarters at Da Nang, General Nickerson had to coordinate the activities of these diverse forces. Like his predecessors who headed III MAF, he functioned within a complex chain of command. His force was under the operational control of General Creighton W. Abrams, USA, Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (ComUSMACV), but on administrative matters affecting the Marines under his command, Nickerson took orders from and reported to Lieutenant General Henry W. Buse, Jr., Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force Pacific (CGFMFPac). As commanding general of III MAF, Nickerson directed the operations of all United States combat units in I Corps. As senior U. S. advisor for I Corps, he was responsible for coordinating plans and activities with Lieutenant General Lam's ARVN forces but had no authority over them. Nickerson also provided "operational guidance" to the commander of the Korean Marine Brigade, which was under the authority of the commanding general of Korean Forces in Vietnam, headquartered in Saigon. With both the South Vietnamese and Koreans, Nickerson had to rely on negotiations and persuasion to secure concerted action.[5]

Nickerson's previous Marine Corps experience had helped to prepare him for his complex assignments. Born in Massachusetts in 1913, he took pride in his part-Indian ancestry and claimed descent from the tribe of Massasoit, the chief who helped the Pilgrims through their first hard winter at Plymouth. Nickerson joined the Marine Corps in 1935 as a second lieutenant after graduating from Boston University. He spent two and one-half years in China with the 4th Marines before World War II. After the war, in which he commanded a defense battalion, an antiaircraft group, and was executive officer of the 25th Marines, he returned to China as a staff officer of the III Marine Amphibious Corps and later of the 1st Marine Division during the occupation of Tientsin. With the United Nations peacekeeping mission to Palestine in 1949, he witnessed another area of international and cultural conflict. Combat command of the 7th Marines in Korea followed, where Nickerson, now a colonel, won both the Army Distinguished Service Cross and the Silver Star Medal.

Having briefly visited Da Nang in 1964, Nickerson began his first tour in Vietnam in October 1966. As a major general, he commanded the 1st Marine Division and then spent five months as deputy commanding general of III MAF. After a tour at Marine Corps Headquarters in Washington during which he received his third star, he returned to Vietnam in

*The Republic of Vietnam was divided into four corps tactical zones, each of which was a political as well as military jurisdiction. Each corps commander thus acted as political and military chief of his region. Under him province chiefs conducted both civil and military administration, and under the province chiefs in turn were district chiefs. Villages and hamlets were beginning to elect their own local governments. Autonomous cities, including Hue and Da Nang in I Corps and Saigon and Cam Ranh elsewhere in the country, were administered by mayors who reported directly to the government in Saigon. MACV ComdHist 70, I, ch. V, p. 1.

**The RFs and PFs were full-time soldiers. They usually operated in company-sized or smaller units charged with the close-in defense of important government and military installations, bridges, villages, and hamlets. At this time they had a separate administration from the regular army, being under the Ministry of the Interior while the regulars were under the Ministry of Defense. In mid-1970, the RFs and PFs would be incorporated into the regular armed forces. The PSDF, established in 1969, had both the military purpose of organizing the people to protect themselves and the political mission of strengthening grass-roots support of the South Vietnamese Government. See Chapters 7 and 8 for more details on these forces.

March 1969 to succeed Lieutenant General Robert E. Cushman, Jr., in command of III MAF.[6]

Nickerson was responsible for the defense of the 10,000 square miles of I CTZ. The location and terrain of this region made it both strategically important and hard to protect. In the north, I Corps bordered the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) which separated South Vietnam from its northern enemy and in fact was far from demilitarized. On the west, I Corps abutted Laos and the enemy bases supplied by the Ho Chi Minh Trail. North Vietnamese troops could easily invade the region from either direction, and their long-range artillery could shell northern Quang Tri from the relative safety of North Vietnam and Laos.

The terrain within I Corps favored the enemy. The rugged, jungle-blanketed mountains that cover the western part of the region hid Communist supply bases and the camps of main force units and facilitated the infiltration of North Vietnamese replacements and reinforcements. East of the mountains, a narrow rolling piedmont quickly gives way to a flat, wet coastal plain much of which is covered by rice paddies and beyond which lie beaches of the South China Sea. Most of the Vietnamese inhabitants of I Corps live in the flatlands, either in the thousands of villages and hamlets interspersed among the rice fields or in the large cities of Hue and Da Nang. Concealed among the civilians were the enemy's political agents and guerrillas, and from the populated areas the enemy drew recruits and supplies.[7]

An estimated 78,000 enemy troops operated in I Corps. According to allied intelligence, the Communist order of battle included about 49,000 North Vietnamese Army (NVA) regulars, perhaps 6,000 main force Viet Cong (VC), over 12,000 VC guerrillas, and about 11,000 supply and administrative personnel. Almost half of these troops, some 42 infantry and 11 support battalions, were believed to be massed along or near the DMZ, while the second largest concentration—16 combat and 4 support battalions—threatened Da Nang in Quang Nam Province.

Three different headquarters directed enemy operations in ICTZ. The *B5 Front* controlled the troops along the DMZ; *Military Region (MR) Tri Thien Hue* had charge of Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces; and *MR 5* oversaw the campaign in the rest of I Corps, assisted by a separate headquarters subordinated to it, *Front 4*, which was responsible for Quang Nam. American and South Vietnamese intelligence officers believed that all three of these commands received orders directly from Hanoi, rather than through the *Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN)*,[8] which commanded the enemy troops in the other three corps areas.

A year of heavy and constant allied pressure, guided by improved intelligence and by an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the enemy's methods and weaknesses, had left the NVA and VC in I Corps battered and exhausted at the end of 1969. Here, as elsewhere in South Vietnam, the allied war effort at last seemed to be moving forward steadily and systematically. Throughout the year, American, ARVN, and Korean troops had driven deep into well-established enemy base areas. They had inflicted heavy losses on main force units, seized or destroyed tons of supplies, and wrecked carefully constructed fortifications, bunkers, and tunnel complexes. At the same time, an intensified pacification campaign had reduced enemy guerrilla strength. By the end of the year, according to the statistical hamlet evaluation system then being used, about 90 percent of the civilians in I Corps lived in secure localities.

Especially impressive to American commanders in I Corps was the improvement of the South Vietnamese regular and militia forces. The ARVN, benefiting from intensive American efforts to improve its equipment, training, and leadership, had displayed increasing willingness and ability to seek out and engage the enemy. While still short of heavy artillery, aircraft, and good small-unit commanders, the ARVN divisions were steadily moving closer to assuming the burden of combat. The RFs and PFs, in the words of Major General Ormond R. Simpson, who finished a tour in command of the 1st Marine Division late in 1969, "are coming on strong. They have a long way to go, but they're coming . . ."[9] Rearmed with M16 rifles and often reinforced by combined action Marines,* these once unreliable troops were fighting with increasing effectiveness against the small enemy units that prowled the populated lowlands.

The North Vietnamese and Viet Cong were still able to mount heavy attacks, especially in northern I Corps, but supply shortages and growing allied combat effectiveness were increasingly forcing them to revert to harassing tactics. During late 1969, the number of engagements with major enemy units steadily declined while the number of rocket and mortar attacks and sapper raids on allied installations and civilian targets

*For details on the Combined Action Program, see Chapter 8.

Marine Corps Historical Collection

MajGen Edwin B. Wheeler, left, and MajGen Ormond R. Simpson take the salute from a Marine honor guard at Da Nang Airbase on 15 December 1969. Gen Wheeler relieved Gen Simpson as commanding general of the 1st Marine Division on this date.

increased. In many parts of I CTZ, intelligence reports indicated severe shortages of food and medicine among the enemy. General Simpson declared in December 1969 that in Quang Nam "The enemy . . . is in very bad shape at the moment. He is very hungry; he is ridden with malatia. Hunger is an over-riding thing with him; he is trying to find rice almost to the exclusion of anything else. He is moving to avoid contact rather than seek it."[10] While the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong in I Corps and throughout South Vietnam remained determined to carry on the fight, their capacity to do so effectively showed every sign of declining.

Allied and Enemy Strategy, 1969-1970

Since the first large United States commitment of infantry units to the war in 1965, American civilian and military leaders had realized that they faced two different but interrelated enemy threats. The first was that posed by North Vietnamese and Viet Cong main forces – units of battalion or larger size that could engage and destory allied troops in conventional battle. The second threat came from guerrillas who operated in small groups within the populated areas and sought to maintain and extend Communist control of the villagers. The guerrillas furnished the main forces with recruits, supplies, and intelligence while the main forces protected the guerrillas by overrunning minor government garrisons and forcing larger government units to concentrate against them rather than against the guerrillas.

The Americans realized that to win the war they would have to defeat both enemy components at the same time – the main forces by large-scale attacks on the units and their bases and the guerrillas by a pacification campaign to root out the enemy's political and military underground while providing security and economic and social improvement for the people. Throughout the war, however, American commanders differed in the degree of emphasis they placed on each element of the strategy. Many, including General William C. Westmoreland, General Abram's predecessor as ComUSMACV, gave priority to the big-unit war and were willing to divert troops from pacification to mount multi-battalion sweeps into remote enemy base areas. Others, including most of the senior Marine commanders in Vietnam, preferred to concentrate on protecting population centers against attack, defeating the local guerrillas, and eradicating the VC political cadre. They urged that large-scale operations be undertaken only when they clearly supported pacification, for example, by driving enemy main forces away

from major cities or heavily populated areas. They contended that if the guerrillas were defeated, the main forces—deprived of information, replacements, and supplies—would be reduced to a minor and easily countered threat.[11] Still others, like Major General Lloyd B. Ramsey, commander of the Americal Division, saw no reason to draw the line between pacification and big-unit war, arguing that "the enemy situation and the terrain dictated the priorities."[12]

In practice, the choice between these approaches involved variations in emphasis rather than an absolute rejection of one element in favor of the other. During 1967, especially, when military support of pacification had been largely turned over to the Vietnamese, the "big-unit war" had received priority in the American effort. Then the savage enemy Tet offensive of January-February 1968 dramatized the fact that pacification and population security could be neglected only at the risk of political and military disaster. At the same time, increasing opposition to the war in the United States, the opening of peace talks in Paris, and the commitment of the new Nixon administration to reduce the American combat role without abandoning the objective of a secure non-Communist South Vietnam created further pressure for a change in priorities.

In General Westmoreland's view, the decisive victory in January-February 1968, which destroyed the enemy's main force Tet offensive, "enabled MACV to concentrate a lot more on the guerrillas and local forces as opposed to the main force."[13] General Abrams, who took over as ComUSMACV after the Tet offensive in 1968, at once began moving toward a more evenly balanced strategy. Late in 1968 he promulgated what he called the "One War" concept as the guiding principle for Allied operations. The "One War" slogan expressed Abrams' belief that the big-unit and pacification wars had to be waged as interdependent and mutually supporting parts of the same struggle. Large-unit attacks on enemy main forces and bases, improved hamlet and village defense, political and economic development, and improvement of the Vietnamese Armed Forces were to be combined into a balanced effort. This effort was aimed at protecting the civilian population, eliminating VC political and military influence, and expanding the authority of the South Vietnamese Government.[14]

Guided by the "One War" principle, the allies in 1969 pressed the war simultaneously on several fronts. United States troops continued their assaults on enemy main forces, but their operations were based on more precise intelligence and were usually aimed at forestalling enemy attacks on populated areas. Instead of being relegated to static territorial defense as they had been in previous years, the ARVN regulars were assigned the same missions as the allied troops and increasingly joined with American units in major offensives. Accelerated efforts to improve their weapons, supply, training, and leadership helped equip them for this role. To replace the regular troops guarding cities, military installations, lines of communication, and villages and hamlets, the South Vietnamese Government, aided by MACV, added 72,000 more men to the RF and PF and rearmed these troops with the M16. Providing still another line of local defense, the government began organizing and arming the People's Self-Defense Force. The Saigon Government also launched a more vigorous police action against the Viet Cong underground and introduced new programs of economic aid and social development. By the end of the year, in the words of the MACV command history, "In practically every phase of the 'One War' concept, the successes were on the allied side."[15]

As the allies increased their emphasis on pacification in 1969, the enemy all but abandoned large-scale combat against American and ARVN regulars and reverted to small-unit hit-and-run attacks, terrorism, and political subversion. The Viet Cong and North Vietnamese did this for several reasons. Repeated bloody defeats had evidently convinced them that they could not win a conventional war against American firepower and mobility. They feared and wanted to counter the allied pacification campaign, and they saw low-level warfare as the most economical way to maintain their military and political position until the United States withdrew her forces from Vietnam or the Paris talks produced an agreement.

The *Central Office for South Vietnam*, which directed enemy operations in most of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN), formally proclaimed the new strategy in its Resolutions 9 and 14, adopted respectively in July and October 1969. Both resolutions stressed the same themes: that major conventional attacks had proven costly and unsuccessful and the VC and NVA must intensify guerrilla warfare in order to defeat pacification and weaken allied forces in preparation for a possible later resumption of the main force war. The resolutions ordered enemy main forces to avoid combat except under the most favorable conditions. Guerrilla and sapper units, reinforced when necessary by soldiers from regular battalions, were to increase

their attacks on Regional and Popular Force troops, the PSDF, and Vietnamese Government installations and personnel. By late 1969, enemy troops throughout South Vietnam were following these orders. Allied commanders reported a steady reduction in the number of large-unit contacts. The incidence of company and platoon or smaller-size engagements declined also, but more slowly, while acts of terrorism, sabotage, and assassination increased in frequency.[16]

The allies' Combined Campaign Plan for 1970, prepared by representatives of MACV and the South Vietnamese Joint General Staff (JGS) late in October 1969, was designed to counter the enemy's tactics and to build upon the previous year's progress. The plan again emphasized pacification and protection of populated areas. It also declared that during the next year American forces in Vietnam would be reduced at a rate "consistent with progress of RVNAF [Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces] improvement and modernization, pacification and development, and the level of enemy activity."

Typical of the counterinsurgency war, a Marine patrol from the 1st Marine Division searches a carefully concealed enemy position after a firefight in June 1970.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A372848

Under the plan United States and ARVN troops were to continue their mobile operations against enemy forces and bases, while screening the population against attack and infiltration. They were to push the enemy away from food-producing regions and deny them use of base areas closest to major cities, important roads and railroads, and centers of government and economic activity. The regulars were to maneuver outside the inhabited regions while the Regional and Popular Forces, the People's Self-Defense Force, and the national police combated guerrillas and eradicated the underground in villages and hamlets.

Two other plans supplemented the Combined Campaign Plan. MACV and the JCS in March 1970 adopted the Consolidated RVNAF Improvement and Modernization Plan (CRIMP). The latest in a series of such plans, this one emphasized improvement in the quality rather than increases in the size of the Vietnamese Army, Navy and Air Force. The plan called for continued effort to create a military system able to defend the country after the Americans left and included provisions for further modernization of equipment, improvement of living conditions for military men and their families, and simplification of the chain of command.

At about the same time, President Nguyen Van Thieu's government proclaimed adoption of its second annual Pacification and Development Plan. This plan, the government's authoritative statement of pacification policy, set the goal of providing at least a measure of security for 100 percent of the South Vietnamese population by the end of 1970. It also contained renewed commitments to strengthen local governments and self-defense forces, assist refugees, veterans, and war victims, combat terrorism, and promote economic development. Thus, as the allies envisioned it, the "One War" was to continue on all fronts in 1970, with the American share of responsibility gradually diminishing and the Vietnamese share increasing.[17]*

The III MAF/ICTZ Combined Plan for 1970

On 13 December 1969, the American, Korean, and South Vietnamese commanders in I CTZ issued their Combined Campaign Plan for 1970, designed to implement the principles of MACV's nationwide plan. This document would guide the operations of the Ma-

*The P&D Plan and allied efforts to carry it out are discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

rines and other allied forces throughout the year.

The writers of the plan assumed that the NVA and VC in I Corps, while not directly commanded by *COSVN*, would continue to follow the strategy outlined in *COSVN* Resolutions 9 and 14. The planners declared that "The enemy no longer seeks a complete military victory. . . . The enemy's overall objective now is to repel or witness the withdrawal of friendly forces by waging limited warfare designed to demoralize friendly forces." In pursuit of this goal, the NVA and VC would try to "demoralize ARVN and FWMAF [Free World Military Assistance Forces] by attacks by fire, sapper attacks, and limited ground probes" to "inflict maximum casualties." The enemy would also increase political propaganda, subversion, and terrorism to discredit the Vietnamese government and disrupt pacification.

The planners defined the enemy threat in terms of the "One War" doctrine:

> In his efforts to achieve political control of RVN, the enemy attempts to demonstrate that the GVN [Government of Vietnam] is not capable of governing the country or of providing credible security to the people. His offensive operations and the resultant reaction operations by friendly forces produce adverse effects on security of the people. The most effective way of assuring security . . . is to keep enemy forces away from [the people] and by neutralizing the VC infrastructure. Without the VCI, enemy main forces cannot obtain intelligence, manpower, or food, prepare the battlefield or move. . . . Providing security to the Vietnamese people is the major objective of RVNAF/FWMAF."[18]*

The campaign plan divided the opposing forces into two categories: the VC/NVA main forces, "often located in remote areas, or entering RVN from safe havens across the border," and the VC guerrilla units, terrorist groups, and underground, "located closer to and often intermingled with the people." American, Korean, and ARVN regulars were to engage and destroy the main forces, neutralize their bases, and keep them away from populated areas. The Regional and Popular Forces, People's Self-Defense Force, and national police would concentrate on the guerrillas. They would "prevent enemy infiltration, attacks, and harassment of villages, hamlets, cities, province and district capitals, industrial centers, military bases, populated areas and vital LOC [lines of communication]."

For the regular forces, a major task under the plan would be destruction ("neutralization") of the enemy's base areas—complexes of tunnels, caves, and bunkers, usually located deep in the mountain regions, which housed headquarters, communications centers, supply dumps, training and rest camps, and hospitals. Allied troops were to attack these areas on a priority system worked out by province chiefs and military commanders, concentrating most of their effort on "those bases which directly affect the areas undergoing pacification and consolidation, key population and economic centers, and vital communications arteries. More remote bases would receive continued unpatterned air strikes and harassment fire," while small allied units blocked the routes between them and the populated districts. The writers of the plan believed that:

> Locating and isolating the enemy's command, control and logistics facilities will contribute to his eventual defeat. Restricting and constraining VC/NVA units in base areas will force a separation between the VCI and the enemy's main military forces. As this separation becomes more complete, and our air and artillery harassment continues, the enemy will be forced to leave his base area sanctuaries and expose himself to our superior firepower and mobility. The enemy will come to fight on our terms, either in locations of our choosing or at least not in areas of his choosing. . . . As long as the enemy is restricted to remote, relatively uninhabitable areas, under constant surveillance and harassment, he is defensive and a less serious threat to the achievement of our objectives.[19]

The Combined Campaign Plan repeatedly stressed "territorial security"—the separation of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese from the civilian population—as the central objective of all allied activity. Every type of allied unit was assigned security functions. American, Korean, and ARVN regulars, for example, when not engaged in mobile operations against bases and main force units, were to patrol constantly to block infiltration "into the fringes of cities, towns and areas adjacent to population centers." They would also reinforce RF and PF units against large-scale attacks, furnish air and artillery support to the militia, and cooperate with them in antiguerrilla operations. RF and PF patrols within and on the outskirts of inhabited areas would keep pressure on local guerrillas and infiltrators while the national police and PSDF maintained order and eradicated the VC underground inside the urban areas.

In an effort to fix precisely the pacification responsibilities of the many and sometimes conflicting allied and Vietnamese political and military authorities in I Corps, the campaign plan required classifying every locality in one of four security categories. Secure

*Free World Military Armed Forces (FWMAF) consisted of all allied nations providing military forces to South Vietnam.

Areas, the first category, were regions, usually heavily populated, where regular civil government was functioning, where people could move freely by day and night, and where enemy activity had been reduced to occasional acts of terrorism or rocket and mortar attacks.

In Consolidation Zones, the second category, enemy main forces had been expelled and the government was in the process of destroying guerrillas and underground cadre. Here terrorism and fire attacks would occur frequently, and the government would impose strict curfews and other population control measures. In both Secure Areas and Consolidation Zones, the Vietnamese province chiefs and under them sector and village authorities, had responsibility for defense and public order, using RF and PF, the PSDF, and the national police as their principal armed forces.

Beyond the Secure Areas and Consolidation Zones lay the Clearing Zone, consisting of thinly populated and Viet Cong-controlled territory, often containing enemy main forces and their bases. In these areas, ARVN division and regimental commanders, in cooperation with their allied counterparts, controlled operations. Here allied regular forces would maneuver "to engage or drive the enemy therefrom and to prevent enemy forces from entering Consolidation Zones." As enemy bases in the Clearing Zone were isolated or abandoned and main force units pushed out, portions of the Clearing Zone could be incorporated into the Consolidation Zone, thus enlarging the range of government control.

Beyond the Clearing Zone, the Border Surveillance Zone encompassed the terrain just within the national frontiers. In this zone, regular units and CIDGs under the direction of tactical commanders sought to "detect, engage and deter" North Vietnamese forces trying to infiltrate South Vietnam.

Each province in I Corps contained a mixture of all four categories of territory in varying proportions. While the areas rarely grouped themselves into neat concentric belts, most of the Secure Areas and Consolidation Zones lay in the eastern piedmont and coastal plain while the Clearing and Border Surveillance Zones encompassed most of the mountainous

LtGen Herman Nickerson, Jr., left, Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force talks with 1stSgt James L. Langford, Company G, 2d Battalion, 9th Marines and with LtGen Hoang Xuan Lam, Commanding General, I Corps as the battalion leaves Vietnam.

Abel Papers, Marine Corps Historical Collection

hinterland. The purpose of this elaborate division, as indeed of the whole Combined Campaign Plan, was to unify all allied military operations for successful prosecution of the "One War."

Troop Redeployment: Keystone Bluejay

Withdrawal of Marines from I Corps had begun in mid-1969. The I Corps Combined Campaign Plan for 1970 assumed that American forces in Vietnam "will be reduced to a level consistent with progress of RVNAF improvement and modernization, pacification and development, and the level of enemy activity."[20] The first months of 1970 witnessed a further major reduction in Marine strength followed by a fundamental change in III MAF's command role.

President Richard M. Nixon, who took office early in January 1969, almost immediately committed himself and his administration to reduction of American troop strength in Vietnam at a rate determined by periodic assessment of three variables—the level of North Vietnamese infiltration and enemy battlefield activity, the ability of the South Vietnamese to fight their own war, and progress in the Paris negotiations. In support of this policy, the Joint Chiefs of Staff prepared a plan during the first half of 1969 for removing United States combat forces from Vietnam in six separate redeployments. At the end of this gradual withdrawal, about 280,000 Americans, most of them in aviation and support units, would remain in-country. These troops would depart as the Vietnamese technical services improved until only a military advisory group was left. The timing, size, and composition of each redeployment would depend on the variables defined by the President. Under the plan, removal of combat troops could be completed as early as December 1970 or as late as December 1972.[21]

Beginning in June 1969, the first two redeployments, codenamed Keystone Eagle and Keystone Cardinal, took out of Vietnam about 65,000 American military personnel including over 26,800 Marines. The entire 3d Marine Division redeployed, as did one attack squadron, one observation squadron, and two medium and one heavy helicopter squadrons from the 1st MAW and proportional contingents of support and service troops.[22]

These first withdrawals brought with them changes in Marine organizations in the Western Pacific. On 7 November, a new headquarters, the I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF),* began operations on Okinawa under Major General William K. Jones, who also commanded the 3d Division which was now based there. This headquarters would control all air and ground units of the Fleet Marine Force in the Western Pacific not committed to Vietnam. On the same date, a subordinate command, the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (Rear) under Brigadier General William G. Johnson, was activated at Iwakuni, Japan, with the mission of overseeing Marine aviation units in Japan and Okinawa.[23]

With Keystone Cardinal, the Special Landing Force (SLF) of the Seventh Fleet ended its long participation in the Vietnam War. Composed of one and later two Marine battalion landing teams (BLTs), each paired with a helicopter squadron, the SLFs had landed repeatedly up and down the coast of South Vietnam, sometimes in independent operations, at other times to reinforce heavily engaged ground forces. The last SLF operation in Vietnam, Operation Defiant Stand, took place south of Da Nang in September 1969. The SLF was then reconstituted from units of the 3d Marine Division and 1st MAW (Rear). While it often cruised offshore during the remaining years of the war, it could no longer land in Vietnam without special permission from the Joint Chiefs of Staff.[24]

In October and November 1969, planning began in Washington and Saigon for the third phase of the American withdrawal. It was expected that the size of this increment would be announced to the public after the scheduled completion of Keystone Cardinal on 15 December and that the actual troop movements would occur early in 1970. As in the other redeployment phases, determining how many troops would come out and how many of those would be Marines involved complex negotiations among the Joint Chiefs of Staff, MACV, III MAF, FMFPac, and Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC). Brigadier General Leo J. Dulacki, Chief of Staff of III MAF, later recalled the interweaving considerations:

> There were numerous factors which came into play in the development of plans for each redeployment phase. Initial overall numerical goals would be established by MACV for

*"Marine Expeditionary Force" was the proper name for an air-ground command formed of a division and wing. III MAF should have been called III MEF, but the title was changed in deference to Vietnamese association of the word "expeditionary" with French colonialism. During 1970, in Marine Corps Order 3120.3A dtd 18 August 1970, the title was changed permanently to Marine Amphibious Force for all MEFs.

III MAF; those raw numerical goals would then have to be translated into coherent troop lists by III MAF planners in consultation with MACV planners and finite numbers then determined on the basis of the troop lists.[25]

Many things were considered by III MAF in redeployment planning. Forces remaining in Vietnam had to maintain tactical integrity, especially when redisposition of forces expanded areas of responsibility. The possibility of the enemy exploiting an advantage caused by redeployment had to be anticipated. Ground combat forces remaining required proportionate combat support and logisitic support. Units deploying to Western Pacific bases needed to retain organizational and tactical integrity in the event that they might be reintroduced into Vietnam. Recognizing that the redeployment of major ground combat units had an immediate impact on ARVN forces, the negative impacts of III MAF redeployments had to be kept to a minimum. As General Dulacki noted, "there had to be . . . a lot of give and take between not only III MAF, but the other corps commanders as well as MACV."[26]

While redeployment deliberations were going on between MACV and the JCS and between MACV and III MAF, Colonel Floyd H. Waldrop, G-3 of the 1st Marine Division, was wrestling with the tactical questions of how to control the TAOR with fewer units and personnel while recognizing the need to have sufficient flexibility to respond to a serious enemy incursion. There were a host of considerations: what bridges will Marine units need to maintain security of and what bridges will need to be turned over to the ARVN? What fixed installations must be given up? What battalion and regimental boundaries will need to be realligned between Marine units and between Marines and the ARVN?[27]

Planning for the early 1970 withdrawal, codenamed Keystone Bluejay, developed into a two-level dialogue. On the first level General Abrams, working in conjunction with Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, had to settle with the JCS and the White House the total number of men to be pulled out. In this process MACV's concern for maintaining adequate forces on the battlefield had to be balanced against the administration's desire to ease domestic political tension by getting the troops out quickly. Second, a tug-of-war occurred between MACV and the Army on one side and III MAF and the Marine Corps on the other over the size of the Marine portion of the withdrawal. Although original III MAF plans called for the early withdrawal of all Marine forces and III MAF proceeded accordingly, HQMC appeared to question the wisdom of the early withdrawal of all Marines from Vietnam.[28] This turned into an argument about how rapidly Marine participation in the war should come to an end.

During October and November, the JCS instructed MACV to consider the feasibility of withdrawing 100,000 men by the end of June 1970 or, as an alternative, 50,000 by late March or early April. General Abrams late in November advised against either of these withdrawals. He argued that both proposals would impose on the ARVN too sudden an increase of responsibility and that it would be militarily unwise in the face of many indications that the enemy planned another Tet offensive for early 1970. If more troops had to be withdrawn, he urged that no more than 35,000 be taken until after the period of maximum danger in late January and February.[29]

If 100,000 men did have to come out in the first half of 1970, MACV preferred that about half of them be Marines. During October MACV developed two alternative compositions for an immediate 100,000-man withdrawal, called the "Marine Heavy" and the "Marine Light." Under the first plan all 55,000 Marines of III MAF would leave Vietnam in Phase Three, while in the second only one regimental landing team (RLT) would go.* Unable to slow the withdrawals directed by Washington, General Abrams initially favored the "Marine Heavy" plan because it would allow MACV to substitute Marine aviation units in the next deployment for Army ground combat units which he felt were more urgently needed in South Vietnam. MACV wanted to apply the "Marine Heavy" plan proportionally whatever the size of the redeployment.

Headquarters Marine Corps authorities in Washington strongly objected to this proposal, which departed radically from earlier JCS plans for a more gradual Marine redeployment. HQMC pointed out that so rapid a withdrawal would overload the Marines' bases and supply facilities in the Pacific and cause severe problems of personnel administration. HQMC also recognized that such a quick withdrawal would leave the Marine Corps, as the only Service not involved in Vietnam, a very vulnerable target for budget reduc-

*A regimental landing team normally consists of a Marine regiment with the attached support forces needed to conduct an amphibious landing. It includes about 6,000 officers and men.

tions.* Elaborating further on Marine Corps opposition to a rapid withdrawal, General Dulacki observed years later that "although there were several reasons for the HQMC position, the most compelling was the fact that the Marine Corps deemed it incongruous that, after some five years of combat in Vietnam, with the war still continuing, the Marines would no longer be participants." In General Dulacki's view as Chief of Staff, III MAF, MACV more so than the JCS was responsible for determining the size force respective Services would send home with each redeployment.[30]

On 15 December, in an address to the nation, President Nixon resolved the question of the total size of the withdrawal. He announced that 50,000 more troops would leave Vietnam by 15 April 1970. However, to guard against a possible Communist Tet offensive, the troop movement would not begin until early February, and none of the combat units involved would cease active operations until mid-February.[31]

The composition of the 50,000-man reduction remained unresolved. MACV still wanted a large Marine contingent and ordered III MAF to plan to withdraw over 19,000 Marines. This would require the removal of two full RLTs under the Marine system of translating each increment into tactical units of the proper size. III MAF designated the 26th Marines (the only regiment of the war-activated 5th Marine Division still in Vietnam) and the 7th Marines for Keystone Bluejay, heading a long list of aviation and support units.

Plans were changing, however, even as III MAF finished this troop list. The Department of the Army discovered that it would lack the men to maintain the Army strength in Vietnam envisioned in the Marine-Heavy option. To assure what MACV considered adequate ground forces during the first half of 1970, more Marines would have to stay in Vietnam. This consideration and continuing Marine Corps opposition to a too-rapid pullout of III MAF led the Joint Chiefs of Staff late in December to reduce the Marine share of Keystone Bluejay to 12,900 men—one regimental landing team with aviation and support units.[32]

"The slowdown of the Marines' withdrawal created a serious complication in ICTZ," said General Dulacki. "The Naval Support Activity had drafted plans for withdrawal concurrent with the rapid and early redeployment of the Marines. Although the Marine withdrawal was slowed, the Navy continued with their original plans." Thus the remaining Marines were faced with the prospect of losing support of the Naval Construction Battalion, the closure of the Naval Hospital at Da Nang, and the end of logistic support provided by NSA. For Marines these were all imminent concerns, but the most critical was the impending loss of the hospital ship from northern ICTZ to the Da Nang area. Urgent pleas of III MAF and FMFPac were to no avail and the hospital closed. Ultimately, General Abrams promised to provide Army hospital support if necessary, and the Army Support Command assumed logistic support functions of NSA. Redeployment moved inexorably forward.[33]

III MAF selected Colonel James E. Harrell's 26th Marines as the regiment to redeploy. The regiment's supporting artillery, the 1st Battalion, 13th Marines, would go out with it. Other artillery units designated for Keystone Bluejay included the 5th 175mm Gun Battery, a platoon of 8-inch howitzers, and Battery K, 4th Battalion, 13th Marines. Since operations around Da Nang required few tracked vehicles, III MAF designated for withdrawal all but one company of the 1st Tank Battalion and the 3d Amphibian Tractor (AmTrac) Battalion. The 1st Anti-Tank Battalion would leave with the armor. The 1st Shore Party and the 7th Motor Transport Battalions headed the roster of support units, which included numerous engineer, military police, communications, reconnaissance, headquarters, and medical detachments.[34]

The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing would relinquish one of its group headquarters—Colonel James R. Weaver's Marine Aircraft Group (MAG) 12, which would move from Chu Lai to the Marine air station at Iwakuni, Japan, with its housekeeping squadrons, Marine Air Base Squadron (MABS) 12 and Headquarters and Maintainance Squadron (H&MS) 12. Three jet squadrons—Marine Attack Squadrons (VMAs) 211 and 223 and Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron (VMFA) 542—and Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron (HMH) 361, with detachments from other units, rounded out the aviation component of Keystone Bluejay.

Late in January, these units began preparing to leave Vietnam. They did so under III MAF Operation Plan (OPlan) 183-69, issued in September 1969, which prescribed procedures for withdrawing units during

*Colonel Don H. Blanchard, who was Head, Joint and Special Plans, Joint Planning Group, HQMC was privy to much of the debate within HQMC and the Pentagon over this sensitive issue. He said he stressed this fear to the Commandant "in the initial go-around on this Inter-Service squabble really with a future roles and missions connotation!" Col Don H. Blanchard, Comments on draft ms, dtd 2Jun83 (Vietnam Comment File).

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A374146

Marines from Company I, 3d Battalion, 26th Marines brought into Elephant Valley by a CH-46 helicopter move out of the landing zone in one of the battalion's last operations. The battalion was scheduled to redeploy with the 26th Marines in Keystone Robin.

continuing hostilities. Under this plan, each redeploying organization ceased active operations or "stood down" well before its actual date of departure and moved to a designated base camp to prepare its men and equipment for sea or air transportation out of the country. Its mission and area of operations would immediately be assumed by other units according to prearranged plans. "There were tremendous logistic problems as well as the tactical ones in breaking contact with the enemy," recalled Major General William K. Jones, who had redeployed his 3d Marine Division to Okinawa the previous November.* The Marines not only had to prepare "equipment and vehicles for shipping" but sort out "equipment to be left or turned over to RVN or Korean forces," and also level bunkers, and clean up camp sites.[35]

While preparing for embarkation, the redeploying organization was to "retain sufficient combat ability for security and self-defense." Marine units were to leave Vietnam as fully organized and equipped formations, but in fact they rarely left with the same men who had served in them in combat. Instead, with each redeployment, a system of personnel transfers went into operation appropriately nicknamed the "Mixmaster." In this process, the departing unit would be filled with Marines from all elements of III MAF who had spent the most time in Vietnam in their current one-year tours while those members of the redeploying unit who had the most time left to serve in-country would transfer to organizations not designated to redeploy. For the 26th Marines, this meant that members of the regiment with most of their tours still to serve were reassigned to the three infantry regiments left in the 1st Division while the battalions of the 26th Marines were filled with men from other units whose tours were nearing an end. Upon return to the United States, the regiment would be deactivated.*[36]

*On redeployment of his division to Okinawa, Major General Jones also became Commanding General, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force and Commander, TF 79 of the Seventh Fleet.

*For details on the procedures and policies for redeploying men and equipment, see Chapter 19.

The troop movements of Keystone Bluejay started on 28 January and continued until late March. Most of the combat units, in accordance with the President's announcement, left Vietnam near the end of the period. Between 28 and 31 January, the 3d AmTrac Battalion (-), the cadre of the 1st Anti-Tank Battalion, and numerous detachments of aviation, engineer, communications, headquarters, and Force Logistic Command personnel left Da Nang by ship and airplane. They were followed in middle and late February by the 7th Motor Transport Battalion and more headquarters and support detachments. Between 11 and 19 March units redeployed included: the 26th Marines; the 1st Battalion, 13th Marines; the 1st Shore Party Battalion (-); the 5th 175mm Gun Battery; a platoon of 8-inch howitzers; and the 1st Tank Battalion (-).[37]

The aviation redeployments of Keystone Bluejay included what the FMFPac historian called "the largest tactical trans-Pacific . . . air movement yet recorded by Marine aviation units." In this operation, codenamed Key Wallop, the 20 A-4E Skyhawks of VMA-223 and the 15 F-4B Phantoms of VMFA-542 took off late in January from their respective bases at Chu Lai and Da Nang and flew to the Naval Air Station (NAS), Cubi Point in the Philippines. From there the two squadrons headed out across the Pacific to their new base at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS), El Toro, California. They stopped over on the way at Guam, Wake Island, and Hawaii and refuelled in the air several times. By 11 February, they had completed their movement. Meanwhile, late in January, HMH-361 embarked its 14 CH-53 Sikorsky Sea Stallions for shipment to MCAS Santa Ana, California. In February, the 12 A-4Es of VMA-211 and MAG-12 with its headquarters and service squadrons moved to Iwakuni.[38]

By the end of March, all the units of III MAF scheduled for Keystone Bluejay had left Vietnam. III MAF now consisted of 42,672 Marine officers and men, including the 23,186-man 1st Marine Division. The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing now had 174 fixed-wing aircraft and 212 helicopters flown and maintained by 1,267 officers and 8,976 enlisted men. The strength of Force Logistic Command had fallen to 348 officers and 5,512 men. The Combined Action Force, which underwent no major reductions in Keystone Bluejay, contained 52 Marine officers and 1,885 enlisted men.[39]

The Change of Command in I Corps

Since 1965, the Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force had commanded all United States forces in I Corps Tactical Zone. Constituting a "separate command directly subordinate to ComUSMACV," III MAF directed all American military operations in I Corps and coordinated combined United States-South Vietnamese activities. The commanding general of III MAF represented ComUSMACV as United States area coordinator for I CTZ, and as Senior U.S. Advisor, he had operational control over the U.S. Army Advisory Group (USAAG) and U.S. Army Special Forces in the northern five provinces. He thus exercised the same authority as the Army field force commanders in the other three corps areas, and in addition he directed the operations of his own air wing.[40]

With the entry of Army units into I CTZ, III MAF had grown into an Inter-Service headquarters. In January 1970, the III MAF staff included 219 Marines, 5 Navy, and 39 Army officers. The headquarters had attached to it the 1st Marine Radio Battalion and two Army units—the 29th Civil Affairs Company and the 7th Psychological Operations Company.[41]

Since the NVA/VC Tet offensive of 1968, a second major U.S. headquarters had existed in I Corps. This was the Army's XXIV Corps, which occupied the former 3d Marine Division Headquarters compound at Phu Bai, just south of Hue. Subordinate to III MAF and controlling American troops in Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces, XXIV Corps had evolved from the MACV Forward command post set up in January 1968 just after the start of the Tet offensive. At its peak strength in March 1968, XXIV Corps (then known as Provisional Corps, Vietnam) had consisted of the 3d Marine Division, the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), and the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). At the end of 1969, the corps, then commanded by Lieutenant General Melvin Zais, USA, contained the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) and the 101st Airborne Division. Its headquarters staff numbered over 500 Army and Marine personnel.[42]

As troop withdrawals began, General Abrams on 3 August 1969 directed his commanders throughout South Vietnam to suggest ways to reduce manpower without redeploying more combat units. Elimination of superfluous headquarters, Abrams suggested, was a logical starting point in this process.[43] His words seemed to apply especially to I Corps with its two corps-level American headquarters. With Marine strength in the northern provinces dwindling more rapidly than Army strength and with Marine operations increasingly limited to Quang Nam Province, the

trend of events pointed toward amalgamation of III MAF and XXIV Corps with the Army gradually dominating the new headquarters.

Marines approached such a merger with caution. From their point of view, more was at stake than administrative efficiency; the proposed change of command could threaten the existence in Vietnam of an operating Marine air-ground team. III MAF, controlling both the 1st Marine Division and the 1st MAW under a single Marine headquarters, constituted such a team, although for some purposes III MAF had had to surrender a measure of command over the wing to the Seventh Air Force. Elimination of III MAF Headquarters or its absorption by XXIV Corps could result in the division passing under Army command while the wing would be taken over by the Air Force—an eventuality which Marines believed would reduce operational efficiency and set undesirable precedents. Thus throughout the discussions of command reorganization in I Corps, both Headquarters Marine Corps and III MAF insisted that as long as the Marine division and wing remained in Vietnam they must have a Marine headquarters over them.

In mid-August, General Nickerson proposed to General Abrams that the XXIV Corps Headquarters be eliminated and that additional Army officers and enlisted men be incorporated into the III MAF Headquarters. At the same time, the number of Marines on the III MAF staff would be reduced so that the new joint headquarters would contain 518 fewer people than the total of the old III MAF and XXIV Corps staffs. The Army-Marine headquarters thus formed would command all United States forces in I Corps and would take over all the duties now performed by III MAF and XXIV Corps. As Marine units redeployed, Nickerson pointed out, Marine strength in the new headquarters could be reduced and the Army representation increased. General Nickerson argued that this reorganization would achieve three goals at once: it would reduce headquarters manpower in I Corps; it would retain the Marine air-ground team as long as Marines remained in Vietnam; and it would provide the framework for a smooth Army takeover of I CTZ as the Marines left. On 25 August, General Abrams accepted this proposal in principle and instructed III MAF to submit detailed plans for its implementation.[44]

By 30 October, III MAF had developed a plan for reducing the total headquarters personnel of III MAF and XXIV Corps by 518 officers and enlisted men, closing down XXIV Corps Headquarters, and establishing a new joint Army-Marine headquarters under the suggested title of "Joint Field Force Vietnam." The proposed new staff would consist of 126 Marine and 99 Army officers and 465 Marine and 251 Army enlisted men. All general and most special staff sections would contain both Marine and Army personnel. The commanding general of the joint force would remain a Marine lieutenant general until most of the 1st Marine Division and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing had redeployed, at which time an Army lieutenant general would replace him. A Marine major general would act as deputy commanding general until all Marines had left I CTZ. After 15 December, when the tour of duty of the current III MAF chief of staff ended, an Army brigadier general would assume that post in the new headquarters. Lieutenant General Zais, the XXIV Corps commander, expressed general approval of this plan but wanted an Army general put in command of the new headquarters on 15 December on grounds the Army already outnumbered the Marines in I Corps.[45]

During November and December, the prospective acceleration of Marine redeployments, by shortening the time Marines would remain in Vietnam, eliminated the need for the planned joint headquarters. Instead, both MACV and III MAF began thinking in terms of a simple exchange of roles between III MAF and XXIV Corps. Under this arrangement, the Army headquarters would take over command of all United States forces in I Corps while a reduced III MAF under operational control of XXIV Corps commanded the Marine division and wing.

Early in February, Colonel George C. Fox, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3 for Plans/Operations of III MAF, drafted a set of proposed "Terms of Reference" defining the powers of a force headquarters subordinate to XXIV Corps. Approved by Lieutenant General Nickerson and by Lieutenant General Buse (Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific), the Terms of Reference declared that III MAF Headquarters was the command and control element of a solely Marine Corps force composed of ground, air, and service elements. Its mission was to "exercise command of Marine Corps forces assigned by higher authority to perform missions and tasks as directed by Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam." III MAF would continue to direct the operations of the 1st Division and the 1st Wing. It would remain in charge of Marine supply and administration, and it would

plan and conduct Marine redeployments. It would stay under the administrative control of FMFPac.[46]

Meanwhile, independent of the III MAF planners, members of the MACV staff in Saigon had been working along parallel lines. In mid-February, General Abrams' headquarters sent to III MAF for comment a set of proposed changes in MACV's Directive 10-11, which defined the command relationships among American forces in Vietnam. The revised directive placed XXIV Corps in command of all United States troops in I Corps and appointed Commanding General, XXIV Corps as the Senior U.S. Advisor for the region. It defined III MAF as "a separate command subordinate to and under the operational control of CG, XXIV Corps," exercising control of all Marine units, both ground and air in I Corps, and conducting military operations within its area of responsibility.[47]

Marines greeted MACV's proposed directive with approval and relief. Colonel Fox recalled that "I was dreading that when they brought up a draft copy [of the revised directive], I thought well, here we go for a real fight. . . . I couldn't believe my eyes when I found out that theirs was . . . completely acceptable to us."[48]

On 19 February, General Abrams came to Da Nang for a final briefing on the plans for the change of command. The briefing produced a heated confrontation between General Nickerson and General Zais. It began when General Zais objected to having to pass orders to the Marine division and wing through III MAF Headquarters. General Nickerson replied with a vigorous defense of the Marine air-ground team. Then, as General Dulacki, the III MAF Chief of Staff recalled:

> . . . You had two three-star generals going at it in the presence of General Abrams . . . rather vociferously. I mean both of them. I wouldn't say that each lost his temper, but you knew how they felt and it was emotional and vocal. . . . I remember General Abrams sitting back and smoking a cigar and listening to all of this. . . . I guess in time . . . he decided he'd heard enough of it. And his comments were to this effect: "I am not about to become involved in trying to disrupt or change Marine Corps doctrine. Marine Corps doctrine is that they have an air-ground team. The wing and the division are integral parts of a MAF headquarters. This is their concept of operations. This is the way they've operated. And as far as I'm concerned I'm not going to do anything to change it at this point in time. . . ."[49]

Viewing the confrontation years later, Dulacki added that "General Zais' position [objecting to the interposition of III MAF Headquarters between XXIV Corps and the 1st Marine Division] was somewhat ironic. At that point in time, he commanded the XXIV Corps which consisted of an Army division and a brigade; and his was a large headquarters interposed between III MAF and those two Army units, an arrangement quite comparable to what III MAF proposed upon transfer of command."[50]

With the new command arrangement thus confirmed by ComUSMACV, Marine and Army staffs set 9 March 1970 as the date for the formal exchange of roles between III MAF and XXIV Corps. On 6 March, General Nickerson instructed all United States units in ICTZ except the Marines to submit operation reports to XXIV Corps Headquarters after 9 March. Marine units would continue to report to the commanding general of III MAF. At the same time, III MAF transferred operational control of the Americal Division and its attached aviation and support units to XXIV Corps. The Army headquarters also received operational control of the U.S. Army Advisory Group in ICTZ and of Company G, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), and took over the direction of naval gunfire support for units in I Corps.*[51]

Control of the Combined Action Force constituted a special problem. Entirely composed of Marines with attached Navy personnel, the force operated under III MAF Headquarters and had platoons in hamlets scattered throughout I Corps. These units had to cooperate closely both with Vietnamese forces and with Army elements that soon would cease to be controlled by III MAF. On 26 March, III MAF resolved the problem by placing the CAF under the operational control of XXIV Corps while retaining administrative control. Later in the year, as the CAF's field of activity was reduced to Quang Nam Province, it would return to III MAF operational control.[52]

Within III MAF itself, the change of command

*This change meant that Sub-Unit One, 1st Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO), now coordinated naval gunfire support throughout the Republic of Vietnam. ANGLICO units rarely operate under Marine commands; their mission is to coordinate naval gunfire support for non-Marine forces. Hence until 9 March naval gunfire support in I Corps was controlled by the Fire Support Coordination Center (FSCC) at III MAF Headquarters while the ANGLICO subunit, under operational control of MACV Headquarters, provided naval gunfire liaison teams for the other three corps areas. After 9 March, the ANGLICO team at XXIV Corps Headquarers took responsibility for calling in naval gunfire missions for both U.S. and ARVN forces in I Corps. Sub-Unit 1, 1st ANGLICO, ComdC, Mar 70. For further details of ANGLICO operations, see Chapter 21.

brought a few organizational rearrangements. The most important of these was the transfer early in March of the 1st and 3d Force Reconnaissance Companies from the direct operational control of III MAF to that of the 1st Marine Division. Like the platoons of the CAF, these units had ranged throughout I CTZ, and the change of their command relations reflected the reduction of their sphere of operations to Quang Nam and to support of the 1st Marine Division.[53]

Besides reassigning control of many units, the change of command involved the movement of III MAF and XXIV Corps Headquarters, with their hundreds of personnel and tons of equipment, to new locations. Both Marine and Army planners agreed that XXIV Corps should take over the III MAF compound at Camp Horn just east of Da Nang City. There the Army headquarters would have the communications and other facilities needed to direct operations throughout I Corps, and there it would be able to maintain closer contact with Lieutenant General Lam, the ARVN I Corps commander, who had his headquarters in Da Nang. Thus the change of American command would require transfer of the XXIV Corps Headquarters from Phu Bai to Camp Horn and the simultaneous movement of III MAF Headquarters to a new site, in each case without interrupting for any length of time the continuing direction of operations.

Preparations for this movement, codenamed Operation Cavalier Beach, began on 30 January. On that date, III MAF and XXIV Corps organized a joint planning group representing the G-1, G-2, G-3, G-4, and G-6 sections of each staff.* The group, under the overall supervision of Brigadier General Dulacki, the III MAF Chief of Staff, was to plan, coordinate, and supervise the move. Throughout the complex preparations, which involved the interchange of facilities, equipment, and personnel along with the concurrent requirement for both Army and Marine headquarters to maintain operational continuity, the Services worked harmoniously. As General Dulacki noted, "there were many opportunities for parochial bickering on the part of the various staff sections but, instead, like true professionals they worked together to make the transfer as efficient as possible." General Zais' guidance to the III MAF Chief of Staff was direct: "You've got a functioning headquarters here. You know what has to be done. You work it out as you see best, and we'll move down when you say you are ready to take us." General Zais gave similar guidance to his staff, and the shift of headquarters was begun.[54]

III MAF first had to find a new headquarters location. Consideration was given to having III MAF and XXIV Corps remain in their present locations with a transfer of functions, but the idea was shelved because of the difficulties created for XXIV Corps in their new role as senior command in ICTZ. General Dulacki remembered commenting to General Abrams after both headquarters had been relocated that "it would have been so much simpler if we had stayed where we were and merely transferred the command functions." He was stunned by Abrams reply, ". . . I was somewhat surprised that was not what you recommended." The option of satelliting III MAF Headquarters on the 1st Marine Division or 1st Marine Aircraft Wing was considered but discounted in part because of Dulacki's recollection of the undesirable aspects of a similar arrangement he experienced on the III MAF staff in 1965, when that staff was satellited on the wing. The impracticality of constructing a new headquarters site was recognized from the outset.[55]

Once again the Seabees came to the rescue, as they had so often in the past. "Since they were phasing down operations due to redeployment of their units, the Seabees volunteered to vacate their headquarters site at Camp Haskins," which was on Red Beach northwest of the city of Da Nang about five miles from Camp Horn. The Seabees moved to a smaller site in the same vicinity. Dulacki observed that it was somewhat ironic that Red Beach is where the Marines first landed in Vietnam in March 1965. Camp Haskins contained barracks and office buildings which could be adapted readily to III MAF's requirements, and it was close to the Force Logistic Command with its existing communications facilities. On 6 February, Marine engineers and Seabees of the 3d Naval Construction Battalion moved into Camp Haskins and began preparing for its new tenant.[56]

Throughout February, at Phu Bai, Camp Horn, and

*In February 1968 at the urging of Colonel Sanford B. Hunt, Communications-Electronics Officer (CEO), III MAF, Lieutenant General Robert E. Cushman, Jr., Commanding General, III MAF redesignated the CEO Section, the G-6 Section. This was done in recognition of the increased coordination and technical control demanded of an expanded corps-level tactical situation brought on by the Tet offensive. This was the first time in Marine Corps history that communications-electronics was elevated to "G" section status, and it continued for the remainder of the war. Col Sanford B. Hunt and Maj James Connell, Comments on draft MS, 12Dec83 (Vietnam Comment File). See also III MAF Directories, Jan-Feb68 in III MAF ComdCs, Jan-Feb68.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A193462

Marine Commandant Gen Leonard F. Chapman, Jr., obscured by another officer, greets LtGen Melvin Zais, USA, Commanding General, XXIV Corps, while medal-bedecked LtGen Hoang Xuan Lam, Commanding General, I Corps Tactical Zone, looks on.

Camp Haskins, the preparations continued. III MAF prepared tables of organization for a much reduced headquarters establishment and drew up lists of functions to be transferred to XXIV Corps. Recognizing that III MAF's staff could aid XXIV Corps with their expanded staff responsibilties, III MAF also selected Marine officers and men for assignment to the XXIV Corps staff. According to General Dulacki, "when we were phasing down, we just let them go through the list of the people and decide what key billets or what key functions they wanted to fill with Marines, and that's exactly how we left the people there."[57] This assisted XXIV Corps greatly and enabled selected Marines to remain in their billets until end of tour, when they were replaced by Army officers. Advance parties of Army officers and men moved into Camp Horn to prepare for movement of the main body of XXIV Corps Headquarters from Phu Bai.[58]

For the headquarters staff of III MAF, it was a time of hard work and some confusion. Colonel Herbert L. Wilkerson, Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, who joined the staff at this time summed up the situation:

> The way I like to describe this is you cut your force into one-fourth, you reassign practically every person – enlisted and officer – to a new billet within that force, not necessarily doing what he was doing before, and displace the CP, all simultaneously . . . Every officer in the 3 shop, practically, changed some responsibility one way or the other and assumed other people's responsibilities, and then displacement of the CP alone is a traumatic experience for a corps level function, and you try to do all this . . . while everybody changes jobs . . . .[59]

In spite of the inevitable difficulties, Operation Cavalier Beach progressed more or less on schedule. On 5 March, III MAF began moving into Camp

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A700390

LtGen Keith B. McCutcheon is seen in a formal pose. Gen McCutcheon relieved LtGen Nickerson as Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force.

Haskins. The next day, XXIV Corps Headquarters with its aviation, artillery, military police, and other support detachments, started its journey to Camp Horn. By 9 March, the day set for the change of command, both headquarters were installed and operating in their new compounds.

The ceremony at Camp Horn on 9 March formally acknowledged two simultaneous transfers of command. Lieutenant General Nickerson turned over operational control of all United States forces in I Corps to Lieutenant General Zais. At the same time, Nickerson passed command of III MAF to his own successor, Lieutenant General Keith B. McCutcheon.[60]

The new commanding general of III MAF was born in Ohio in 1915. An honor graduate of the Army ROTC course at Carnegie Institute of Technology, McCutcheon in 1937 resigned his Army Reserve commission to accept a second lieutenancy in the Marine Corps. His reason for doing so forecast the focus of his Marine career: frustrated in efforts to enter Army aviation, he knew the Marines had airplanes, and he wanted to fly. McCutcheon received his naval aviator's wings in 1940. Thereafter his assignments and activities paralleled and contributed much to the growth of Marine aviation. In 1944, as operations officer of MAG-24 during the invasion of the Philippines, McCutcheon perfected a basic system for command and control of close air support. He also was awarded the Silver Star Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and six Air Medals for gallantry in action. During the 1950s, he played a leading part in Marine helicopter development, commanding HMR-161 in Korean combat. Later, as commander of MAG-26, he continued to improve helicopter tactics and organization.

McCutcheon's involvement with Vietnam began in 1963 where, as a brigadier general and assistant chief of staff for operations on the staff of the Commander in Chief, Pacific (CinCPac), he spent two years helping to plan and direct the introduction of American forces into the war. From June 1965 to June 1966, he commanded the 1st MAW in Vietnam, receiving his promotion to major general in January 1966. Then, as deputy chief of staff for air at Headquarters Marine Corps, McCutcheon directed further expansion of the Marine aviation effort in Vietnam and supervised the introduction to combat of new and improved helicopters. He was promoted to lieutenant general in February 1970.[61]

A slightly-built, soft-spoken officer, General McCutcheon approached his new task with the same confidence and determination he had expressed long ago as a young man writing to a prospective employer:

> I particularly pride myself in the fact that I can carefully and meticulously plan and organize my work in a most efficient manner; and not only plan the work, but to execute it with rapidity and accuracy.
>
> The ability to do these things lies in my will-power and conscience. Anything I have been made responsible for, or anything I have undertaken, I have always endeavored to complete.
>
> It also seems that my capacity increases with the pressure; that is, the more work there is for me to do, the more efficiently I perform it.[62]

General McCutcheon took over a III MAF whose headquarters was about half the size of the one Nickerson had commanded at the beginning of the year. In contrast to 219 Marine, 5 Navy, and 39 Army officers and 509 Marine, 12 Navy, 19 Army, and 2 Air Force enlisted men in January, the force staff in April consisted of 105 Marine and 6 Navy officers and 204 Marine and 6 Navy enlisted men.[63] The total size of III MAF following initial redeployments was approaching 40,000 Marines, down close to 15,000 from the start of 1970.

During and after the move to Camp Haskins, III MAF Headquarters was plagued with communications difficulties. Just before 9 March, the automated teletype machines at Camp Horn stopped working, creating a pileup of paper and tape. The staff hauled bags of this material with them to Camp Haskins. On 9 and 10 March, the teletypes at Force Logistic Command Headquarters, which were to serve III MAF at Camp Haskins, also broke down. Compounding the problem, the ditto machines which reproduced messages for distribution failed at the same time. Hurried repairs restored all the machines to operation by 12 March, and personnel from III MAF, FLC, and the 5th Communictions Battalion cleared up the message backlog and established normal communications. Even then, the system proved cumbersome, with couriers running back and forth between FLC and Camp Haskins every 30 minutes or so. General Dulacki, recalling the experience, hoped that "next time we're a little bit closer to communications."[64]

The reduction in the size of the III MAF staff was a reflection of its reduced role. The difficult question was, how lean a staff could be organized to satisfactorily perform the mission? III MAF realized that the old "Marine Corps Schools concept," in which a skeleton III MAF staff would parasite off division and wing staffs, just wouldn't work. On the other hand, the argument made by some to keep the large existing III MAF staff intact was equally impactical.[65]

The decision was ultimately made to develop an austere T/O with no fat. "It was to be a lean organization, adequate to perform the new III MAF mission with no frills, and one which recognized the inexorably continuing redeployment. Although, at times, seemingly draconian measures were necessary to achieve that goal, in the end it was accomplished and accomplished successfully."[66] When General Chapman visited III MAF in early 1970, he was pleasantly surprised to see the realistic approach that III MAF had taken in sizing the staff.

The reduced III MAF staff had barely enough personnel to carry out its command functions. Colonel Wilkerson commented in July that III MAF Headquatters ". . .strictly maintains a command center for monitoring what's going on. . . . The command center . . . has a watch of one staff officer and one staff NCO and one general clerk, and that's the extent of our participation. . . . [CG, III MAF] can't really participate other than to advise people and try to keep up to date on what's going on. . . ."[67]

XXIV Corps Headquarters had its problems, also. From concentrating primarily on tactical control of troops, General Zais and his staff had to assume the many logistic, administrative, and political responsibilities formerly discharged by III MAF. They had to adjust their thinking to deal with all of I Corps rather than only the two northern provinces, and they had to establish a relationship of trust and cooperation with General Lam, who had worked closely with III MAF. XXIV Corps Headquarers, like III MAF, discovered that it had underestimated the number of men required for its job. The Army staff expanded to meet its new responsibilities and by June was overflowing the old Marine compound at Camp Horn.[68]

By mid-1970, both XXIV Corps and III MAF had recovered from the confusion of their alteration of roles. The small-unit war being waged required no large transfers of troops between division TAORs, and XXIV Corps usually left direction of day-to-day operations in Quang Nam Province to the 1st Marine Division. In June, General Dulacki said:

> In general I think the relationship between III MAF and XXIV Corps is very good. There are no serious problems. . . . I think a lot of the staff sections in XXIV Corps couldn't quite understand that III MAF was the senior headquarters insofar as the division and wing was concerned. It took them a little while to understand that if they have any orders and directions for the wing or the division they had to come through us, and in general there are no problems in this regard.[69]

Although he initially had objected to III MAF's continued control of the division and wing, Lieutenant General Zais proved "very understanding, very considerate" in his dealings with the Marines. "At the lower staff levels, occasionally, Service parochialism or jealousy (on both sides) would rear its ugly head, due to a failure to understand the other Services' normal modus operandi. But the longer the two headquarters worked together, the trust, confidence and respect between the two grew and solidified." As General Dulacki observed more than a decade later, "Neither General Zais nor General McCutcheon would have had it otherwise."[70]

CHAPTER 2

The War Continues

Overview and the Defense of Da Nang
The Inner Defenses: Northern Sector Defense Command and Southern Sector Defense Command
The 1st and 26th Marines: The Rocket Belt—The 5th Marines: Thuong Duc, An Hoa, and Arizona Territory
The 7th Marines: The Que Son Mountains—Results

Overview and the Defense of Da Nang

For the American, ARVN, and Korean infantrymen patrolling the hamlets, rice paddies, and mountains, and for the aviators, artillerymen, and others who supported them, command changes brought little variation to the daily routine of war. Throughout the first half of 1970, both sides in I Corps adhered to the patterns of operation established during the previous year. The NVA and VC continued their small-unit attacks, terrorism, and infiltration. Seeming to threaten a resumption of large-unit warfare, they massed troops and supplies along the DMZ in the first months of the year and opened new bases along the Laotian border in northwestern Quang Tri. They also appeared to be building new bases and reopening or enlarging old ones in Quang Nam, Quang Tin, and Quang Ngai.[1]

Throughout I Corps, allied troops took the offensive to protect the population and disrupt the enemy buildup. In northern Quang Tri, the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), in cooperation with regiments of the 1st ARVN Division, launched Operation Greene River on 19 January. Greene River covered a long series of large and small-scale operations which lasted until 22 July, accounting for almost 400 enemy dead at a cost to the allies of 68 killed and 967 wounded.

To the south, in Thua Thien, the 101st Airborne Division began the year with Operation Randolph Glen. Like Greene River, and like most named operations in this period, Randolph Glen was the title for a mixture of pacification and search and clear activities. In Randolph Glen, pacification predominated. The 101st Airborne Division committed all three of its brigades to protection of the coastal lowlands. On 1 April, the division began Operation Texas Star, in which one of its brigades continued to patrol the populated areas while the other two kept in constant motion in the piedmont, pursuing enemy main force units and seeking out and destroying base areas. Continued until 5 September, Operation Texas Star resulted in over 1,700 NVA and VC killed while costing the 101st Airborne and the ARVN units working with it over 350 killed in action (KIA), many from boobytraps and small ambushes.[2]

In southern I Corps, the Americal Division was engaged in Operations Pennsylvania Square, Iron Mountain, Geneva Park, Frederick Hill, and Nantucket Beach. As was true elsewhere, these operations were, in reality, an unbroken series of patrols on the fringes of populated areas and forays into back-country sanctuaries. Month after month, the Americal troops whittled away at the enemy in unspectacular but deadly contacts.[3]

In the first months of 1970, the ARVN regulars of I Corps concentrated on forestalling enemy incursions into towns and villages. Both in conjunction with American units and on their own, the ARVN troops supplemented constant small-unit patrolling with larger sweeps against major Communist formations. One of the most successful independent ARVN operations, Operation Duong Son 3/70, began on 11 February when elements of the 1st Armored Brigade and the 37th and 39th Ranger Battalions attacked into an area near the coast south of the Korean enclave at Hoi An. On the fourth day of this operation, they engaged two VC main force units, the *V-25th Infantry Battalion* and the *T-89th Sapper Battalion*. The ARVN troops, assisted by artillery and helicopter gunships, killed over 140 of the enemy, including a battalion commander, and drove the survivors into blocking positions established by two Regional Force companies, which took a further toll of the fleeing Communists.[4]

While the regular units sought out enemy main force formations, the Regional and Popular Forces intensified their patrolling around villages, hamlets, and government installations. Displaying increased confidence and aggressiveness as a result of improved training and weapons, the RFs and PFs set increasingly more night ambushes. In the first two months of 1970, the territorial troops claimed to have killed over 1,300 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong while taking 77 prisoners and capturing over 600 weapons.[5]

Both regulars and militia paid for their successes. In the first three months of 1970, the ARVN in I Corps lost 303 men KIA and 984 wounded, while the RFs and PFs lost 195 killed and over 700 wounded. In

return, they accounted for over 4,400 enemy killed, took over 1,100 prisoners, and captured almost 2,000 weapons.[6]

The remaining Marines in I Corps contributed their share to the ongoing effort. The jets and helicopters of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing flew missions throughout the five northern provinces, and the fixed-wing attack and reconnaissance aircraft ranged into Laos and Cambodia. On the ground in Quang Nam Province, the 1st Marine Division continued to aggressively seek out the VC and NVA.

After the redeployment of the 3d Marine Division late in 1969, Marine ground operations were limited largely to Quang Nam Province, where the 1st Marine Division conducted continuous small-scale combat in defense of Da Nang. During the first half of 1970, the 1st Marine Division, unlike the U.S. Army divisions operating in I Corps, did not name its operations, but its complex activities were typical of the way the war was being waged there.

Major General Edwin B. Wheeler commanded the 1st Marine Division at the beginning of the year. Born in New York State in 1918, Wheeler entered the Marine Corps in 1941 and served in the Pacific with the 1st Marine Raider Battalion. In 1943, while commanding a rifle company, he won the Silver Star Medal during the New Georgia campaign. Wheeler again led Marines in combat in Korea. Commanding the 3d Marines in 1965, he spent his first Vietnam tour in the Da Nang area. After duty as commanding officer of the Basic School and Assistant Division Commander, 2d Marine Division, Wheeler, who had been promoted to brigadier general in 1966 and major general two years later, returned to Vietnam in June 1969 as deputy commanding general of XXIV Corps. He took over the 1st Marine Division from Major General Ormond R. Simpson on 15 December 1969.[7]

An accident cut short General Wheeler's tenure as division commander. On 18 April, the helicopter carrying Wheeler, members of his staff, and Colonel Edward A. Wilcox of the 1st Marines on an inspection of a search and destroy operation crashed on approach to a jungle landing zone southwest of Da Nang. Wheeler suffered a broken leg and had to relinquish command.[8]

Wheeler's replacement, Major General Charles F. Widdecke, arrived on 27 April. A year younger than Wheeler, Widdecke had entered the Marine Corps after graduating from the University of Texas at Austin. He fought in the Pacific with the 22d Marines, winning the Silver Star Medal at Eniwetok and the Navy Cross at Guam, where he was severely wounded. Like Wheeler, Widdecke had served in Vietnam before. He entered the country early in 1966 as commanding officer of the 5th Marines. Later, while still commanding his regiment, he also served as chief of staff of Task Force X-Ray at Chu Lai. Promoted to brigadier general while in Vietnam, he went from there to a tour as Chief of Staff, FMFPac. He came to the 1st Division from a two-year assignment in Washington as Director, Marine Corps Reserve, during which he had received his second star. He would command the division until its redeployment in April 1971.*[9]

Under both Wheeler and Widdecke, the division performed the missions specified in its operation order during late 1969. Under this order, the division, in coordination with South Vietnamese and other allied forces, "locates, interdicts, and destroys enemy forces, bases, logistical installations, infiltration routes and LOC [lines of communication] within the assigned TAOR/RZ."** The division was to provide security for the city of Da Nang and assist Vietnamese forces "as requested" in support of pacification, while continuing surveillance, reconnaissance, and psychological warfare within its TAOR "and such other areas as may be assigned." The order also required the division to

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*After his return from Vietnam, Major General Widdecke commanded the I MAF at Camp Pendleton until his retirement on 1 July 1971. He died on 13 May 1973.

**The various terms used in delineating the territorial responsibility of units were defined at this time as follows:

Division TAOR: "The area assigned to the 1st Marine Division in which the responsibility and authority for the development and maintenance of installations, control of movement and the control of tactical operations involving troops under division control is vested in the Commanding General, 1st Marine Division. All fire and maneuver conducted within the TAOR, or the effects of which impinge upon the TAOR, must be coordinated with the Commanding General, 1st Marine Division."

Reconnaissance Zone (RZ): "The land area adjacent to the 1st Marine Division TAOR, over which the Division Commander has the responsibility for surveillance and reconnaissance operations. All fire and maneuver within this area must be coordinated with the Commanding General, 1st Marine Division . . . ."

Area of Operation (AO): "An area where forces conduct operations during a specific period of time. These operations are coordinated with, and advance agreement obtained from, appropriate GVN/FWMAF representatives. An AO is normally assigned for a specific operation which may be within or outside of a TAOR." 1st MarDiv OpO 301A-YR, Anx C, dtd 10 Dec69.

furnish relief and support for combined action platoons (CAPs), Special Forces camps, and GVN district headquarters within its area of responsibility. Finally, the division was to be ready to send up to three reinforced battalions with a command group to assist allied forces anywhere in South Vietnam.[10]

In conformity with countrywide allied strategy, the division concentrated its efforts on keeping the enemy away from the city of Da Nang and its heavily populated environs. Division infantry units and supporting arms were "disposed to provide maximum security for the Da Nang vital area, installations and LOCs of greatest political, economic, and military importance in the division TAOR."[11] The division directed its offensives against enemy forces and base areas which posed the most immediate threat to the centers of government, population, and economic activity or to allied military installations.

A collection of Vietnamese forces was loosely formed into a roughly division-level organization also tasked to defend the Da Nang TAOR. Known as Quang Da Special Zone (QDSZ), this headquarters, while not staffed sufficiently to perform division-level command and control, did exercise command by the summer of 1970 over 12 infantry battalions with attendant artillery and armor support.* Originally formed to coordinate security of the city of Da Nang, QDSZ in the spring of 1970 established a field command post southwest of Da Nang on Hill 34. Weekly conferences were held between commanders of QDSZ, 1st Marine Division, and the 2d Republic of Korea Marine Brigade from which combined staff action originated. While QDSZ never matured to the level desired by the Marines, under the guidance of the 1st Marine Division the South Vietnamese headquarters was able to provide a measurable contribution to the defense of the Da Nang TAOR.[12]

The 1st Marine Division's TAOR encompassed about 1,050 square miles of territory. Beginning above the vital Hai Van Pass in the north, it extended into the Que Son Valley in the south and included all of Quang Nam Province and portions of Thua Thien and Quang Tin. Almost 1,000,000 Vietnamese lived in this region, over 400,000 of them in Da Nang and most of the rest in the coastal lowlands and river valleys south and southwest of the city.[13]

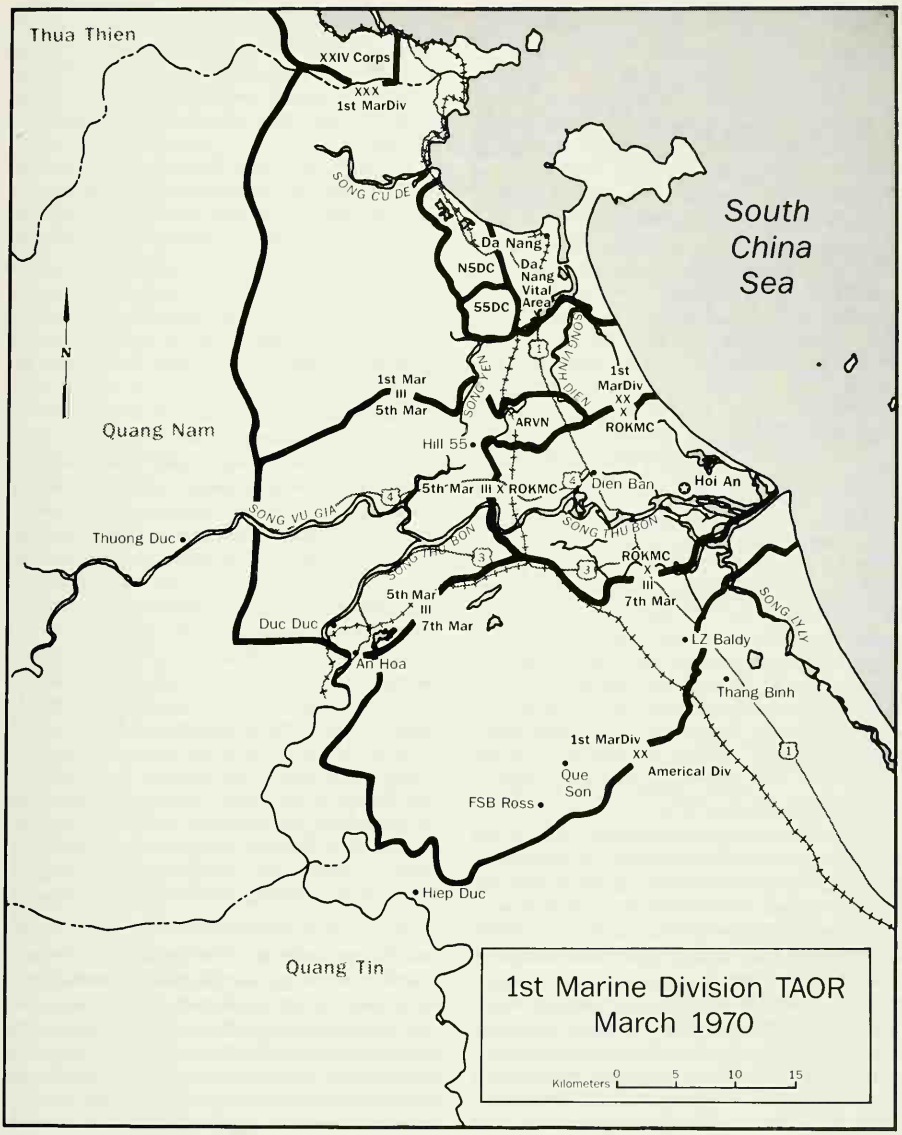
During five years of bitter warfare, Marines had become familiar with the terrain of Quang Nam. In the northern portion of the TAOR, rugged mountains of the Annamite Chain thrust down into the South China Sea to form the Hai Van Peninsula, restricting overland movement northward from Da Nang through the Hai Van Pass to the old imperial city of Hue. Extending westward and southward, these mountains form an arc around the rolling hills and lowlands of Da Nang. The eastern boundary of the Da Nang TAOR is the South China Sea.

Just south of Da Nang's wide bay in the heart of Da Nang was the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing's facility from which military installations sprawled westward about four miles to the hill mass of Division Ridge. To the immediate south and southwest of Da Nang, rice paddies dominate the landscape, broken only by intermittent hills with thick treelines and patches of brush dotted with hamlets and villages. Throughout the lowlands thousands of grave mounds furnished the enemy cover and concealment, and numerous low hills provided sites for cantonments, outposts, and defensive positions.

Innumerable streams and waterways intersect the coastal lowlands. They include several major rivers which flow out of the mountains to the west and run into the South China Sea. The Cu De River empties into the bay of Da Nang north of the city. The Cau Do River and the Han River encircle the city on the south and east and separate it from Tien Sha Peninsula (called Da Nang East by Marines) and the helicopter base at Marble Mountain which is actually located on the flat seashore just north of the rock outcroppings that gave it its name. Still farther south the Vu Gia and Thu Bon Rivers run through broad valleys which cut deep into the mountains.

On the western edge of the TAOR, the heights of the Annamite Chain wall in the coastal plain, extending the entire length of the western boundary from north to south. Steep, jungle-covered, their peaks hanging with mist and fog during the monsoon season, these mountains are penetrable on foot or by helicopter. In the far southern part of the 1st Marine Division's TAOR, a spur of the Annamites projects northeastward toward the coast. Known as the Que Son Mountains, the range overlooks the Que Son Valley to the south of it, and its hills, ravines, jungles,

*At the end of July 1970, QDSZ had operational control of the 257th Vietnamese Marine Corps Brigade (2d, 5th, and 6th Battalions and a battalion of light artillery), the 1st Ranger Group (21st, 37th, and 39th Battalions), the 5th Mobile Strike Group, and the 44th and 64th Artillery Battalions. FMFPac, MarOps, Jul70, p.22; *The Marines in Vietnam, 1954-1973, An Anthology and Annotated Bibliography* (Washington: Hist&MusDiv, HQMC, 1974), p. 141.


Thua Thien
XXIV Corps
XXX
1st MarDiv
SONG CU DE
Da Nang
NSDC
Da Nang Vital Area
55DC
South China Sea
N
Quang Nam
1st Mar
III
5th Mar
SONG VU GIA
SONG THU BON
1st MarDiv
XX
X
ROKMC
ARVN
Hill 55
5th Mar III X ROKMC
Dien Ban
Hoi An
Thuong Duc
ROKMC
X
III
7th Mar
5th Mar
III
7th Mar
Duc Duc
An Hoa
LZ Baldy
Thang Binh
SONG IY LY
1st MarDiv
XX
Americal Div
Que Son
FSB Ross
Hiep Duc
Quang Tin
1st Marine Division TAOR
March 1970
Kilometers 0 5 10 15

and many caves offered the enemy a ready-made stronghold close to the populated regions.

From the outskirts of Da Nang to the remote mountain valleys, North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops infested the 1st Marine Division's TAOR. According to allied intelligence, a North Vietnamese general, Major General Nguyen Chanh Binh, commanded these enemy forces. His headquarters, the identity of which was obscured by the enemy's use of multiple names, was known to allied intelligence as *Front 4, Group 44,* and *Quang Da Special Zone Unit.* As senior military commander, General Binh apparently controlled *Front 4*'s NVA regulars and VC main force and local force units. The hamlet and village guerrillas took their orders from the local VCI, who in turn were directed by the provincial party committee which worked closely with General Binh. Under *Front 4*, three tactical wings directed field operations—a *Northern Wing* in the Hai Van area, a *Central Wing* west of Da Nang, and a *Southern Wing* believed headquartered in the Que Sons.

In early 1970, allied intelligence estimated that *Front 4* had 12,000-13,000 troops under its command, including a possible 16 NVA and VC infantry battalions, two NVA rocket artillery battalions, and an indeterminate number of VC local force and guerrilla units. The enemy in Quang Nam, as elsewhere in South Vietnam, was using North Vietnamese replacements to rebuild VC main force and even local force units which had suffered heavy losses in the fighting of the last two years. Thus the enemy's *Southern Wing*, according to allied intelligence reports, had disbanded one of its NVA infantry regiments, the *36th*, to reinforce hard-hit VC elements in the lowlands.

In accordance with their nationwide strategy, the enemy in Quang Nam had reverted to low-intensity guerrilla warfare. *Front 4*'s NVA regiments rarely engaged in combat. They spent most of their time training and refitting in their mountain base camps while VC main and local forces and guerrillas, assisted by small NVA detachments, kept limited but constant pressure on the allies. Against allied regular troops, the enemy usually relied on ambushes, rocket and mortar attacks, and occasional sapper assaults on bases to inflict as much damage as possible with minimal forces. During the year, these small-scale attacks were made against Regional and Popular Force units in an effort to disrupt the pacification program. To the same end, the VC and NVA kept up a continuing campaign of terrorism against civilians, ranging from kidnappings and assassinations of individual anti-Communists to full-scale mortar and ground assaults on pro-government hamlets. To further terrorize the population, the enemy fired rockets into built-up areas, concentrating on Da Nang where their inaccurate missiles could inflict the most casualties and damage.

Against both civilian and military targets, most rocket, mortar, and sapper attacks came during periodic offensive surges or "high points," interspersed with weeks of relative inactivity during which the enemy repositioned troops and replenished supplies. High points in 1970 occurred in January, April-May, and August-October. At all times throughout the division's TAOR, the enemy's mines and boobytraps took their daily toll of Marine, ARVN, and civilian lives and limbs.[14]

Small detachments of NVA and VC regulars moved continually throughout the 1st Marine Division's TAOR, enemy rocket and mortar teams positioned themselves for attacks, and local VC planted mines and boobytraps. While these combat actions were carried on, replacements, medical units, and supply parties upon whom depended the enemy's elaborate and flexible logistics system, operated continuously. According to allied estimates, about 90 percent of the enemy's arms and ammunition in Quang Nam Province, 30 percent of his food, and about 25 percent of his other supplies in early 1970 were trucked down the Ho Chi Minh Trail from North Vietnam and then moved by porters into mountain base areas 20-30 miles south and southwest of Da Nang. These base areas also harbored camps, training installations, and headquarters. The rest of the enemy's supplies, including most of the food and the material for boobytraps, came from the populated lowlands, where it was procured by the VCI through purchase, contribution, or forced requisition and then cached for movement to the base areas.

Within Quang Nam Province, most enemy supplies travelled on the backs of porters. These porters were members of transport battalions and sometimes regular frontline troops, reinforced when necessary with civilians conscripted in VC-controlled hamlets. They customarily operated in teams of three to 10 persons each carrying a 30- to 70-pound pack. Usually protected by armed escorts and moving by night or through covering terrain, the supply parties often followed rivers or streams in and out of the mountains. The waterways also allowed them to move rockets and other heavy equipment by sampan. The porter, mov-

ing ahead of attacking units instead of behind them as do the supply troops of conventional armies, prepositioned ammunition and weapons for assaults and collected cached rice and other stores for movement back to their mountain bases. By the beginning of 1970, American and Vietnamese intelligence agencies had traced most of the enemy's principal infiltration routes, located the major base areas, and developed a detailed picture of the Communist supply system. Many of the 1st Division's operations during the year were aimed at the disruption of that system.[15]

The 1st Marine Division had to coordinate its operations continuously with South Vietnamese and Korean forces. The four battalions of the Republic of Korea 2d Marine Brigade, containing about 6,000 officers and men, were based at Hoi An, about 15 miles south-southeast of Da Nang. They defended a roughly semi-circular TAOR which extended from the South China Sea inland to a point just northeast of the coastward end of the Que Son Range. Under their special command relationship with MACV, the Koreans were supposed to receive "operational guidance" but not orders from III MAF and in fact possessed almost complete autonomy within their TAOR.[16]

Quang Nam contained substantial South Vietnamese regular and territorial forces. The ARVN contingent consisted of the four-battalion 51st Regiment, a veteran unit highly regarded by American advisors; the 1st Ranger Group of three battalions; the 1st Armored Brigade; the 17th Armored Cavalry Squadron; and units of artillery and support troops. Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG) based at Thuong Duc deep in the mountains along the Song Thu Bon blocked important enemy infiltration routes. Protecting the populated areas were 52 Regional Force companies (now being organized into RF groups of four to seven companies), 177 Popular Force platoons, and 3,000 men of the national police force.

At the beginning of 1970, the effectiveness of these forces continued to be reduced by a complicated chain of command. The 51st Regiment operated under Quang Da Special Zone while the other ARVN regular formations in Quang Nam remained under direct control of General Lam, the I Corps commander. Lam occasionally placed one or more of them under QDSZ for a particular operation. General Lam also commanded the CIDGs and through the province chief controlled the RFs and PFs. Since the creation of QDSZ, the commanders and staffs of III MAF and the 1st Marine Division had worked to build it into a full-fledged tactical headquarters with a balanced combat force of all arms under its permanent control, capable of directing the defense of the province. Progress had been slow, retarded by the labyrinthine complexities of ARVN internal politics and by the Vietnamese shortage of qualified divisional staff officers.[17]

In conformity with overall allied strategy, the ARVN regulars in Quang Nam Province had as their primary mission attacks on enemy main forces, base camps, and lines of communication while the RF/PF and police units concentrated on local defense and the eradication of the VC infrastructure. At the beginning of 1970, Marine commanders were discussing with General Lam the deployment of the province's ARVN units. The Marines, anticipating the redeployment of one of their own regiments, wanted the Vietnamese troops to take charge of their own area of operations within the 1st Marine Division's TAOR, while General Lam preferred to have each of his units share an area of operations with one of the Marine regiments. Early in March, the 51st Regiment established such a joint TAOR with the 5th Marines, but the other ARVN units continued to operate throughout the 1st Marine Division area.[18]

The 1st Marine Division deployed its own four infantry regiments—the 1st, 5th, 7th, and 26th Marines—in a series of concentric belts centering on Da Nang. A reinforced artillery regiment, the 11th Marines, provided fire support for the infantry. The 1st Reconnaissance Battalion and the 1st Tank Battalion supplemented and reinforced the efforts of the infantry regiments, as did strong contingents of engineers, transportation, and service troops.

With the division as its defensive shield, the city of Da Nang, the airfield to the west of it, and Tien Sha Peninsula and Marble Mountain Air Facility to the east of it constituted the Da Nang Vital Area. This area was not included in the 1st Marine Division's TAOR. Instead, III MAF in conjunction with South Vietnamese authorities supervised its defense. The division's responsibility began just outside the Da Nang Vital Area with the Northern and Southern Sector Defense Commands (NSDC and SSDC). These commands consisted of various headquarters and support units organized for mutual defense. Between them they guarded Division Ridge, the high ground west of the Da Nang Airbase.

Beyond the defense commands lay the Rocket Belt, its main defensive purpose implicit in its name, guarded by the 26th Marines with its battalions spread out

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373930

Marines from Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division patrol valley just three miles west of Da Nang. The incongruity of war and peace is vividly demonstrated as the seemingly unconcerned farmer employs both a crude plow and a water buffalo to work his plot.

north and west of Da Nang and the 1st Marines deployed to the southwest, south, and southeast. Southwest of the 1st Marines, the 5th Marines operated in a TAOR which encompassed the An Hoa Combat Base and industrial area and the infiltration routes along the Song Thu Bon and Song Vu Gia. Still further south, the 7th Marines' TAOR stretched from the coastal plain westward to include the Que Son Mountains and about half of the Que Son Valley. The southern boundary of the 7th Marines' TAOR also constituted the boundary between the TAORs of the 1st Marine Division and the Army's Americal Division.[19]

As part of the Keystone Bluejay redeployment, the 26th Marines stood down for deactivation during late February and early March, and the division realigned its regimental TAORs to fill the resulting gap. Early in March, the 1st Marines extended its TAOR to the northward and took over most of the 26th Marines' portion of the Rocket Belt. At the same time, it turned over the southwestern portion of its TAOR, including Hills 37 and 55, to the 51st ARVN Regiment. The 5th Marines redeployed its 1st Battalion to the SSDC to assume the function of division reserve while continuing to cover its TAOR with its remaining battalions. The 7th Marines slightly enlarged the boundaries of its existing TAOR. This deployment remained in effect throughout the first half of 1970.[20]

With the 3d Marine Division withdrawn from Vietnam, Marines no longer stood guard along the DMZ, but the 1st Marine Division retained responsibility for reinforcing northern I Corps with a regiment if a new escalation of the war there required it. To meet this responsibility with the reduced forces left by Keystone Bluejay, the division staff during March and April drafted Operation Plan 2-70. Under this plan, a reinforced regiment was to deploy to northern I CTZ within 36 hours of the order being given. The 7th Marines was to provide two infantry battalions and the command group, leaving one battalion to protect a reduced TAOR. The 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, in division reserve, less one company, would constitute the third battalion of the regiment, which would have attached to it an artillery battalion and companies of engineers and other support troops. The plan charged the responsible commands with being ready to move one battalion northward within eight hours' notice, the second battalion with the command group within

18 hours, and the third battalion and the balance of the force within 36 hours.[21]

Operation Plan 2-70 never had to be executed, as the war continued at low intensity throughout I CTZ during the first six months of 1970. Month after month, III MAF summed up the 1st Division's activities in the same words: "In Quang Nam Province, the 1st Marine Division emphasized security and pacification operations. . . ."[22]

To deal with the varied and pervasive enemy activities, Marine operations were divided into three categories. Category I focused on populated areas where the VC and NVA had direct contact with the populace, often on a daily basis. Here cordon and search operations were executed to seal the enemy in the hamlets and villages where he conducted his business, then to root him out and kill or capture him. The activities of the Combined Action Program and Combined Unit Pacification Program (CUPP)* were also included in this category.

Category II covered small-unit day patrols and night ambushes on the edges of the villages and hamlets. In these operations, the Marines tried to engage and destroy NVA/VC main force detachments maneuvering in the lowlands or at least to sever the contact between these enemy forces and the guerrillas and political cadres among the people. Category II included reconnaissance in force operations of generally company scale designed to disrupt enemy supply movement and prevent the launching of sustained rocket and mortar attacks. The largest percentage of 1st Marine Division activities fell into Category II.

Category III applied to multi-company and occasionally multi-battalion operations against NVA and VC main force units and their headquarters and bases. These were not aimed at permanent occupation or pacification, but instead sought to inflict casualties, destroy or capture stores and equipment, and prevent the enemy from reinforcing units operating in inhabited areas. Category III operations usually took place in thinly populated mountain and jungle regions.[23]

In each regiment's TAOR, the size of combat activities varied, with mostly fireteam and squad operations in the Rocket Belt and platoon-, company-, or battalion-size maneuvers in the 5th and 7th Marines' areas, which were closer to enemy bases. The daily routine of Category I and II activities was altered occasionally by regiments and battalions to execute a Category III operation. Periodically, in response to intelligence forecasts of intensified enemy pressure, the division would direct increased day and night activities, inspection and improvement of fortifications, and often temporary reassignments or redeployments of platoons, companies, or battalions to reinforce vital areas. While the broad tactical features of the war were similar throughout the division's TAOR, each regiment conducted combat operations with relative independence, tailoring small-unit and larger scale maneuvers to meet the varying threat of local guerrillas, NVA, or VC main force units.

The Inner Defenses: Northern Sector Defense Command and Southern Sector Defense Command

The Da Nang Vital Area extended south from the city to the Cau Do River and to a point on the seashore just below MAG-16's base at the Marble Mountain Air Facility. On the west, the Vital Area's border lay just beyond the edge of the Da Nang airfield complex.* To the south, the Vital Area bordered the TAOR of the 1st Marines, and on the west it adjoined the NSDC and the SSDC.

Each of these sector defense commands coordinated the security activities of the American units and installations and Vietnamese local forces within its boundaries. Each was under the command of the senior officer of a tenant American unit, who carried out this assignment in addition to his regular duties.

Colonel Don D. Ezell, commanding officer of the 1st Marine Division's artillery regiment, the 11th Marines, also commanded the NSDC, until 25 March, when he was relieved by Colonel Ernest R. Reid, Jr. The TAOR of the NSDC, a 35,000 grid square** stretch of hills, scrub, and rice paddies, extended north almost to the Cu De River and included the sand flats of Red Beach where elements of the 9th MEB had come ashore in 1965. In April 1970, NSDC included 17 Marine, Army, and Navy units and facilities, among them the 1st Marine Division Command Post, the Northern Artillery Cantonment, and Force Logistic Command, along with 31 Vietnamese villages and hamlets. Also among the tenant units responsible for providing personnel to man the lines of NSDC was Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division. Colonel

*For details on the CAP and CUPP programs, see Chapter 8.

*For details of the defense of the Da Nang Vital Area, see Chapter 14.

**A grid square is 1,000 meters square on a standard tactical map.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A194077

Two Marines, part of a provisional rifle company from the Force Logistic Command, search a stream eight miles west of Da Nang for Viet Cong hiding places.

William C. Patton, who commanded the battalion during the first few months of 1970, recalled the security role of his command which numbered over 3,200 men:

> The personnel of HQBN accomplished their normal workday requirements and then manned almost two miles of division perimeter at night. The band members, for example, toured the division on a daily basis playing for troop ceremonies and morale, and at night did an exceptional job of perimeter security. Several were wounded during the period. The security for division headquarters was maintained with no breaches of the lines during the period August 1969 to March 1970.[24]

The commander of NSDC supervised the maintenance and improvement of the fixed defenses of NSDC units. Using personnel from the tenant organizations, he sent out daily and nightly patrols and ambushes to find and eliminate enemy infiltrators who worked their way past the 1st and 26th Marines. Troops of each sector defense command regularly cooperated with local Vietnamese forces in pacification activities and in cordon and search operations which targeted specific hamlets and villages. During March, a moderately active month, NSDC units conducted 526 patrols and ambushes, 361 of them at night. NSDC forces reported nine enemy sightings, engaging the enemy four times, while killing one and taking three detainees*, and capturing two AK-47s.[25]

*A person suspected of being a Viet Cong soldier or agent but not yet positively identified as such.

From its border with NSDC, the TAOR of the SSDC extended south to the Cau Do River and lapped around the western side of NSDC's TAOR. Containing the Hill 34 complex and two important highway bridges, the Cobb Bridge and the Cau Do Bridge, the SSDC covered the southern and southwestern approaches to Da Nang. In January 1970, the commanding officer of the 1st Tank Battalion, Major Joseph J. Louder, commanded SSDC, using troops from his battalion and from the 26th Marines as his principal patrol and reaction forces.

Louder's units conducted daily and nightly patrols and ambushes, averaging between 1,300 and 1,400 per month during early 1970. SSDC patrols had sporadic contact with small groups of enemy, and occasional larger clashes occurred. On the night of 3-4 January, for example, Outpost Piranha, some one and one-half miles south-southwest of the 1st Marine Division CP, repelled an attack by seven grenade-throwing VC who rushed the defenses under cover of mortar and rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) fire. The Marines on the outpost killed one of the attackers but had four of their own men seriously wounded. To better meet such attacks, in February Major Louder constituted a mobile reaction force of 2 officers and 75 enlisted Marines drawn from the 1st Tank Battalion and the 26th Marines.[26]

When both the 1st Tank Battalion and the 26th Marines redeployed in Keystone Bluejay, the new division reserve, the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, assumed primary responsibility for the security of SSDC. To assure a smooth turnover, Major Louder worked closely with the 1st Battalion's commander, Lieutenant Colonel Cornelius F. ("Doc") Savage, Jr. On 28 February, Company C of Savage's battalion, under operational control of the tank battalion, took over perimeter defense of Hill 34. Company B joined Company C in sector defense during the first days of March, and, after 3 March these two companies took over patrolling responsibilities from the tank battalion. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Colonel Savage and his S-3 visited all SSDC units with Major Louder. On 5 March, as all but one company of the 1st Tank Battalion stood down for redeployment, Savage's battalion assumed full responsibility for the SSDC. From that time through the end of June, the battalion, with its CP at Hill 34, kept two companies in rotation in the northern and central sectors of the SSDC to block infiltration while two more platoons guarded the Cobb and Cau Do Bridges.[27]

The 1st and 26th Marines: The Rocket Belt

Beyond the NSDC and the SSDC lay the Rocket Belt, a block of territory roughly delimited by a semicircle with a 12,000 meter radius centered on the Da Nang airfield. This area, its radius determined by the range of the enemy's 122mm and 140mm rockets, contained most of the sites from which the NVA/VC could launch rockets to harass American military forces and further terrorize Vietnamese civilians in American occupied areas.

Since June 1968, the 1st Marine Division, at the direction of III MAF, had been building a physical barrier along the outer edges of the Rocket Belt. Called the Da Nang Barrier and later the Da Nang Anti-Infiltration System (DAIS), the project would, when completed, consist of a cleared belt of land 500 meters wide running the entire length of the Rocket Belt. Within the cleared strip, two parallel barbed wire fences, wire entanglements, and minefields were designed to halt or at least delay infiltrators. An elaborate array of sensors and observation devices (many of them leftovers from the ill-fated "McNamara Line" along the DMZ), installed in or just behind the barrier, would alert allied troops and artillery to counter enemy probes. Under a plan prepared by General Simpson in March 1969, the barrier would be guarded by fire of Marine rifle companies and a supporting artillery group of two 105mm howitzer batteries, the entire force under direct operational control of the 1st Marine Division. According to General Simpson's estimate, the system would ultimately require no more than 1,800 Marines to keep the enemy out of the Rocket Belt, freeing about 5,000 Marines for offensive operations.[28]

In January 1970, the DAIS existed largely on paper. Marine, ARVN, and Korean engineers had cleared most of the land, erected the barbed wire fences and 23 wooden watchtowers, and laid a few minefields. Unfortunately, divided responsibility, adverse weather and terrain (much of the barrier ran at right angles to the natural drainage system of the Da Nang area, causing washouts during the monsoon season), and lack of manpower and materials had prevented completion of the system. Most of the sensors had never been emplaced, and the forces to monitor them and guard the barrier had not been assembled or positioned. Those portions of the system that had been built were now deteriorating. Brush, in places up to 18 feet high, had covered parts of the cleared strip, and both VC infiltrators and civilian farmers bound for their rice paddies had cut passages through the unguarded wire. At the end of his tour in command of the 26th Marines in mid-December 1969, Colonel Ralph A. Heywood said: "The wire that was constructed on both sides of the barrier . . . [has] been breached in a thousand places. This is going to take—a conservative estimate would take—about 200 people one month given the necessary equipment to get that wire back in shape."[29]

The worth of the DAIS was the subject of much debate within the 1st Marine Division in 1970. Lieutenant Colonel Pieter L. Hogaboom, then operations officer of the 26th Marines, said that the officers and men of the 26th Marines from the regimental commander (Colonel James E. Harrell) on down lacked any enthusiasm for the efficacy of the system. Nevertheless, they tried to make it work. Their efforts fell into two areas, said Hogaboom, "an attempt to evaluate the reliability of the sensor readings as indicators of enemy activity, and an attempt to improve tactical response to the readings, assuming that they actually indicated movement across or along the trace of the DAIS."

To test and improve the system, Hogaboom said that the regiment "even went to the extent of having fire teams, squads and entire platoons from Captain George [V.] Best's [Jr.] Company G crawl, walk, and run across and along the line of sensors, only to get readings that were inconsistent with the size and relative stealth or activity of the the crossing unit . . . ." At other times units got readings "from points on the trace that were under observation in good visibility conditions," where monitoring units were pretty certain there wasn't any activity. 26th Marines concluded that at best the sensors were right only part of the time.

"To improve response time," explained Hogaboom, "26th Marines saturated both sides of the trace of the DAIS with patrols and ambushes and covered as much of the trace as possible with direct fire weapons. Crews prepared range cards for their segments of the trace, using sensor locations as targets." To increase the possibility of making contact with the enemy "patrols, primarily of fire team and squad size, were routed to cover points on the trace of sensors with a history of frequent activations. The patrols were in contact with readout stations in the company CPs . . . and were tasked to respond to activations."

Direct fire weapons, including M60 and .50 caliber machine guns, 106mm recoilless rifles, and tank main guns, were brought to bear on targeted sections of the

DAIS when readout stations radioed sensor numbers to gun crews. "For the 106s and main guns, fleshette rounds with fuses cut in advance for each target on a specific range card . . . were used. Claymores were employed to augment direct fire weapons." Incorporating live fire training into these elaborate procedures, the response time between sensor activation and getting well-aimed fire on target was compressed to a few seconds, but as the 26th Marines' operations officer observed, "Rately was the enemy, his remains, or his equipment found."[30]

Because of the inadequacies of the DAIS, protection of the Rocket Belt continued to require the constant efforts of large numbers of Marine infantrymen, and in January 1970 the 1st and 26th Marines shared this task. The 26th Marines, under Colonel Harrell, Heywood's replacement, already designated for Keystone Bluejay redeployment, held the northern half of the Rocket Belt and guarded Hai Van Pass, through which Route 1, South Vietnam's only north-south highway, and the railroad parallelling it run to connect Da Nang with Hue. The regiment's 2d Battalion, in the northernmost TAOR of the Division, had companies positioned at the Lien Chieu Esso Depot, Hai Van Pass, and Lang Co Bridge and Hill 88 north of the pass. The Marines of this battalion operated mostly in the steep, jungled mountains and left close-in protection of the road and railroad largely to the Vietnamese RFs.

Next in line to the south and southwest of the 2d Battalion, 26th Marines, the companies of the 3d Battalion protected Nam O Bridge, where Route 1 crosses the Cu De Rivet, and held positions on Hills 190 and 124 and Outpost Reno. From these points, they could observe and block enemy infiltration routes along the Cu De, through the villages and rice paddies just south of it, and in the rolling, brush-covered country still further south. The 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, with its CP on Hill 10 southwest of Da Nang, patrolled a TAOR of rice paddies, hamlets, and patches of woods that lay directly below Charlie Ridge, a hill mass that projected from the Annamite Mountains and constituted a much-used enemy harboring place close to Da Nang.[31]

Throughout January and February, each battalion conducted patrols and ambushes around-the-clock. Marines of the battalions also manned observation posts and sensor readout stations and launched occasional company-size reconnaissance in force opetations along known infiltration routes or cooperated with Regional and Popular Forces to cordon and seatch villages. In January, for example, the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, conducted 2 company operations, 26 platoon combat patrols, and 180 squad combat patrols. Marines of the battalion set up 61 listening and observation posts and 338 night ambushes.[32]

South and east of the 26th Marines, the battalions of Colonel Herbert L. Wilkerson's 1st Marines, which

Enemy 122mm rockets uncovered by the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines after an attack on the Da Nang Airbase are lined up for display. Members of a Marine engineer demolition team seen in the background were assigned the dangerous task of disarming the rockets.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373105

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A374149

Men of the 2d Battalion, 26th Marines rush to board a waiting CH-46 from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364. Responsible for the protection of the northern half of the Da Nang Rocket Belt, the Marines are responding to a possible enemy sighting.

had its headquarters at Hill 55, controlled the portion of the Rocket Belt extending from the foot of Charlie Ridge to the coasral flats south of Marble Mountain. This area of operations contained a larger civilian population than did that of the 26th Marines, and in its villages and hamlets the Marines had learned some of their first hard lessons about the difficulties of pacification. The countryside was infested with local guerrillas, as well as with small groups of main force VC/NVA.

Adjacent to the TAOR of the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, operated from Hills 22 and 37 in an area of flooded paddies and scattered treelines to cover its portion of the Rocket Belt, defend several important bridges, and halt infiltration eastward from Charlie Ridge and northward from enemy refuges in the heavily populated country south of the Cau Do River. The battalion had one company on CUPP duty and during January had temporary operational control of Company G from the 2d Battalion to cover the base of Charlie Ridge. Further to the east, the 1st Battalion protected another segment of the Rocket Belt, helped guard the railroad and highway bridges over the Cau Do, and acted as regimental mobile reserve. Guarding from the Rocket Belt to the beaches of the South China Sea, the 2d Battalion contested the coastal infiltration routes to Marble Mountain. During January and most of February, the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines took over the southern portion of the battalion's TAOR to reinforce the area against an expected enemy Tet offensive.

The 1st Marines saturated its TAOR with fire team and squad-size patrols and ambushes just like 26th Marines did. With Vietnamese RFs and PFs and police, they cordoned and searched villages for guerrillas and conducted occasional company-size sweeps. During January, the 2d Battalion cooperated with the Korean Marines to the south to support a land-clearing operation. In this heavily populated region, with its many VC and VC sympathizers, mines and boobytraps constantly plagued the Marines, causing casualties almost daily. During two months of operations around Hills

22 and 37, for instance, Marines of the 3d Battalion found 99 boobytraps and detonated 22. In contrast, after they moved north into the former 26th Marines TAOR in March, in four months they found only eight boobytraps and set off none.[33]

In January, to supplement the usual ground patrols and ambushes, both the 1st and 26th Marines participated in a new system of heliborne combat patrols codenamed Kingfisher.* This was the latest variant in a long series of quick-reaction heliborne assaults which the Marines had experimented with since 1965. Kingfisher differed from earlier efforts since it was an offensive patrol, intended to seek out the enemy and initiate contact rather than exploit engagements begun by ground units. As Colonel Wilkerson put it, "This is an offensive weapon that goes out and hunt[s] them . . . . They actually invite trouble."[34]

The ground component of the Kingfisher patrol was a reinforced rifle platoon embarked on board three Boeing CH-46D Sea Knight helicopters. Accompanied by four Bell UH-1G Huey Cobra gunships, a North American OV-10 Bronco carrying an aerial observer, and with fixed-wing air support on call, the Marines would patrol the regimental TAOR by air. Usually airborne at first light, when night activities were ending and daytime patrols were preparing to depart, the Kingfisher patrol would search the area of operation for signs of the enemy. The platoon would be landed if the enemy were sighted or if an area bore some signs of enemy presence. When contact was made, the Cobras would provide close air support and the aerial observer would call in fixed-wing air strikes and artillery fire if necessary. While one platoon flew the day's mission, the rest of the Kingfisher company was equipped and ready to move by air to reinforce it, often with extra ammunition placed on the landing pad for quick loading. When the Kingfisher platoon was inserted, the CH-46s would immediately return to the company area, pick up a second platoon, and take off to assist the first platoon or exploit a new contact.[35]

Kingfisher operations required careful coordination. In the 1st Marines, for example, the company assigned to Kingfisher came under direct operational control of the regiment. Each patrol flight included a UH-1E Huey command helicopter. This aircraft carried the company commander, a regimental staff officer in radio contact with the 1st Marines' CP, and the air commander. These officers together would decide when and where to land the troops. Once the platoon was on the ground, the company commander, who remained aloft, directed its movements. Each time a Kingfisher patrol went out, regimental headquarters informed the battalions of the areas within their TAORs that were likely to be investigated, so that the battalions' own patrols could avoid them. The regiment also informed the artillery, which would then suspend all fire at those coordinates unless called upon to support the Kingfisher platoon.[36]

While both the 1st and 26th Marines flew Kingfisher patrols, the first and most spectacularly successful use of the tactic was made by the 1st Marines. Late in December 1969, First Lieutenant William R. Purdy received orders to prepare his Company A of Lieutenant Colonel Godfrey S. Delcuze's 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, for "a special mission . . . doing something entirely different from the normal day-to-day walking through rice paddies, seeing no enemy," and hitting boobytraps, an activity to which they had grown too accustomed. The new mission was Kingfisher. Lieutenant Purdy carefully prepared his Marines. He refreshed their training in squad and platoon assault tactics, including squad and fire team rushes, which few of the men had employed since coming to Vietnam. He also drilled them in quick loading and unloading from helicopters, first with chalk outlines of the CH-46D on the company's landing pad and then at Marble Mountain with actual CH-46Ds of Lieutenant Colonel Walter R. Ledbetter, Jr.'s HMM-263, which would furnish the air transport.[37]

Company A ran its first Kingfisher on 2 January. Its assault platoon landed twice, encountering no enemy while experiencing problems with communications and coordination which it and the helicopter crews quickly solved. Lieutenant Purdy also learned anew that terrain seen from the air often was not what it appeared to be. "On our first landing," he recalled, "we landed in what we thought was a large green field; it turned out to be a large green rice paddy with water up to waist deep."[38]

The company launched its second Kingfisher on 6 January. About 0730, five miles or so south of Marble Mountain in a flat, sandy portion of the 2d Battalion's TAOR, the airborne patrol saw some men sitting next to a hut. The smoke that was also observed turned out

*On 26 December 1969, the 1st Marines conducted its first Kingfisher patrol of the regimental TAOR. The platoon was landed on a target in the Ngan Cau area but no contact was made. A debrief was conducted and notes were taken on lessons learned in preparation for future patrols which began in January 1970.

to be from cooking fires. The men reacted with apprehension when the Huey in which Lieutenant Purdy was riding came down for a closer look. After talking the situation over, Purdy and the air commander, Lieutenant Colonel Kermit W. Andrus, S-3 of MAG-16, decided to land the platoon and check the suspects' identities.

As the three CH-46Ds came into the hastily marked landing zone, a heavy volume of small arms fire from the ground removed all questions about who the men were. In fact, the Marines were landing almost in the middle of a sizeable group of armed VC. As Corporal James D. Dalton, a squad leader, put it, "We dropped right down in on 'em—actually we dropped right down on their breakfast table."[39] The VC seemed to be completely surprised, the platoon commander observed:

> . . . We landed right directly on top of people, and they were running right beside the windows of the choppers, and we got a couple of kills right out of the choppers. We were almost within distance to bayonet them as they were running along the windows of the choppers.[40]

Under fire which damaged the hydraulic system of the CH-46D piloted by Lieutenant Colonel Ledbetter, the Marines, benefiting from their many rehearsals, deplaned, quickly organized, and attacked by fire team and squad rushes. Caught completely off balance, the VC began running in all directions. They had strong defenses against a conventional ground attack, but in the words of one Marine "we had dropped inside their perimeter, and they were having to sky [flee] and we were fighting from their positions, every berm we came to all we had to do was drop our rifles on it and start firing."[41] As they scattered across the flats to escape the infantry's grenade and rifle assault, the VC came under fire from the Cobra gunships which, as Corporal Dalton put it, "were tearing them up."[42] When the fight ended about 0855, Company A had counted 15 enemy killed by its own and the Cobras' fire, and the Cobra crews claimed nine more in an area that the infantry did not sweep because of enemy mine and boobytrap markers. The Marines, who had suffered no casualties, also took one prisoner and captured 2 weapons, 17 grenades, and assorted documents and equipment.[43]

By mid-February, the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, had

Infantrymen of Company A, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines are seen waiting for a helicopter to pick them up. The Marines are taking part in the Kingfisher operations, which began in January 1970 as heliborne combat patrols to seek out dispersed enemy units.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A372554

launched 18 Kingfisher patrols, 13 by Company A and 5 by Company D. The first three or four Kingfishers produced contacts comparable to that of 6 January, but as time went on the patrols found fewer and fewer targets. The same proved true of the 26th Marines' Kingfishers. Evidently the enemy, after suffering heavily a few times, had reduced his early morning movement and learned to take cover at the sight of helicopters aloft at that time of day. Kingfishers, other than at first light, proved ineffective because the number of civilians in the fields prevented ready identification of and rapid attack upon enemy groups. Nevertheless, Lieutenant Colonel Delcuze, Lieutenant Purdy, and most other officers and men involved in Kingfisher believed it a valuable tactic, especially against the small enemy detachments that operated in the Rocket Belt. Kingfisher had demonstrated that it could inflict significant enemy losses, and even patrols that found no contact reduced the VC's freedom of movement and produced useful intelligence.[44]

While the Kingfisher concept enjoyed much success in the early months of 1970, Lieutenant Colonel William V. H. White, commanding officer of 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, said that too much emphasis was placed on the Kingfisher operation. He felt that since it tied up a dedicated rifle company, which could have been used more constructively, Kingfisher "should have been dropped much sooner than it was or conducted periodically from within one of the battalion combat bases." He said it was an excellent tactical innovation, but the enemy quickly diagnosed the concept of employment and adjusted his activities accordingly.[45]

In mid-February the 1st Marines began the complex process of relieving the 26th Marines so that the latter could stand down from combat for redeployment and deactivation. The operation began on 15 February when the companies of the 2d Battalion, 26th Marines, stationed at Hill 88 and Lang Co Bridge, returned to the battalion rear area on Division Ridge. Elements of the Army's 101st Airborne Division assumed control of that part of the Marines' area of operations. On 1 March, the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, temporarily under the operational control of the 26th Marines, relieved the 3d Battalion and elements of the 2d Battalion, 26th Marines in their arc of positions ranging from Outpost Reno in the south to the Esso Depot and Hai Van Pass in the north. On 6 March, the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, extended itself to cover the TAOR of the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, including Hills 10 and 41 and the outpost on Hill 270. Meanwhile, the 1st Marines gave up much of the far southwestern portion of its old TAOR, turning over security of the Cau Do Bridge to the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, and its former headquarters cantonment on Hill 55 to the 51st ARVN Regiment.[46]

The replacement of elements of one regiment with elements of another without major interruption of the continuous combat operations needed to protect the Rocket Belt required careful planning and coordination at both regimental and battalion levels. An example of this process was the relief of the 3d Battalion, 26th Marines, by the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines. Planning began on 10 February with an orientation visit by Lieutenant Colonel Frank M. Boyd, commanding officer of the 1st Marines battalion, to Lieutenant Colonel John J. Unterkofler of the 26th Marines unit. The visit included a tour of the departing battalion's fixed positions. Three days later, the executive officers of the two battalions together surveyed the positions and began detailed planning of the relief. On 21 February, the S-3 of Boyd's battalion arrived with an advance party of 46 Marines, some of whom began familiarizing themselves with defenses and terrain while others went for an orientation to the sensor readout sites on Nam O Bridge, Hill 190, and OP Reno. Key staff officers of the relieving battalion established themselves during the same period at Unterkofler's CP and began a round of visits to the Vietnamese district headquarters in the TAOR. Beginning on 24 February, staff officers of the two battalions held daily meetings to hammer out final arangements, while the Headquarters and Service Company of the 26th Marines battalion prepared to move that unit's CP and redeploying personnel to the 1st Shore Party Battalion camp. That movement took place during the last two days of February. On 1 March, riflemen of the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines occupied their new forward positions without incident and quickly resumed the routine of patrols and ambushes.[47]

As the 26th Marines stood down, its battalions transferred most of their men to other units of the 1st Marine Division. Many Marines of the 3d battalion, for example, went by truck or helicopter to units of the 1st Marines the day the battalion was relieved. The 26th Marines conducted its last combat patrol in Vietnam on 6 March. On 18 March, after almost two weeks spent tying up administrative and logistic loose ends, representatives of the regiment, which had arrived in

Vietnam in 1967 and received a Presidential Unit Citation for its defense of Khe Sanh in 1968, participated in a farewell ceremony at Da Nang airfield. The following day, 350 remaining personnel, including Colonel Harrell with the regimental colors, boarded aircraft for the flight to El Toro, where they were welcomed home by the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Leonard F. Chapman, Jr.[48]

The departure of the 26th Marines left the 1st Marines in charge of the entire Rocket Belt, an area of about 534 square kilometers. The 1st Marines moved its headquarters from Hill 55 to Camp Perdue behind Division Ridge near the center of its enlarged TAOR. The regiment had undergone a change of command in February, when Colonel Edward A. Wilcox, who had served in Korea with the 7th Marines and had just completed a tour as G-2 on the staff of the 1st Marine Division, replaced Colonel Wilkerson. Wilkerson joined the staff of III MAF as Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3.

After the redeployment, the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines held the northern portion of the arc around Da Nang, with one company on CUPP duty and the others on Hill 190, at the Esso Depot, and at Nam O Bridge. The battalion stationed a reinforced platoon at the top of Hai Van Pass. The 1st Battalion held the central sector from Outpost Reno—taken over from the 3d Battalion on 28 March—to a boundary line southeast of Hill 41. The eastern TAOR, now nearly doubled in area, remained the responsibility of the 2d Battalion. These dispositions would continue unchanged for the rest of the year.

The 1st Marines kept tight security of the Rocket Belt, conducting patrols and ambushes and manning lines 24 hours a day. Companies protected command posts, firebases, cantonments, bridges, and observation posts; patrols probed infiltration routes and potential rocket launching sites; and ambushes were set in during the hours of darkness. Battalions occasionally rotated company positions within their TAORs, conducted company-size sweeps, or cordoned off hamlets for searches by PFs and police. High threat periods brought shifts of companies between battalions to strengthen key positions and increased numbers of night patrols and ambushes.[49]

At times, battalions varied their tactics. In June, for instance, the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, operating in heavily boobytrapped country, reduced the number of its daytime patrols and instead began setting up observation posts at strategic points manned by rifle squads and sniper teams. According to the battalion's report, "This change not only increased cognizance of many densely vegetated areas but also decreased the number of Marine boobytrap casualties."*[50]

In brief fire fights, the Marines inflicted losses on small enemy units infiltrating the populated areas and the VC's political and administrative cadre. On 10 February, for example, a patrol from Company E, 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, on its way to a night ambush site about three miles south of Marble Mountain, collided unexpectedly with a "large . . . VC/NVA force." The point man, Corporal Ronald J. Schiattone, immediately opened fire and the rest of the unit deployed and attacked. A short fire fight followed, with the enemy trying to break contact while another patrol from Company E moved into blocking positions. The firing died down, and a sweep of the area disclosed four VC/NVA bodies, three AK-47 assault rifles, three M16s, and assorted other weapons and equipment. Drag marks and blood trails indicated that the enemy had suffered more casualties than they had left behind.[51]

A few weeks later, a squad from Company K, 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, while patrolling in brushwood country west of Da Nang, "heard movement in thick vegetation and assaulted with grenades and small arms fire." Searching the area, they found a dead enemy with a pistol, grenades, medical gear, rice, and documents. When translated, the documents identified the dead man as a VC district paymaster.[52]

Not all patrol encounters were with the enemy, as a squad of Company B of the 1st Battalion found out. Returning from a patrol west of Hill 10 on the morning of 23 March, the Marines came upon three bull water buffaloes attended by a Vietnamese child. Something about the Marines irritated the animals and, in the words of the battalion spot report:

> All 3 bulls started to charge the point man at a slow pace. VN child was able to retain 2 of the bulls and the 3rd bull kept charging the squad. Sqd leader gave orders to back up

*The tactics that were employed to best control activity in areas of operation often varied based on the judgments of commanders. Colonel William V. H. White, who as a lieutenant colonel commanded the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines from January to May 1970, challenged the view that increased cognizance could be maintained over the battalion's TAOR from strategically placed observation posts. In his opinion the size and nature of the terrain and the thousands of people in it—civilians, VC, RFs, PFs, ARVNs—made it necessary to get out among them to know what was going on." Col William V. H. White, Comments on draft ms, 6Jul83 (Vietnam Comment File).

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373245

Marines from Company A, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines emerge from a heavy-lift CH-53 helicopter in a search and destroy mission in a long-time enemy base area known to the Marines as Charlie Ridge, located 12 miles southwest of the Da Nang Airbase.

and not shoot unless necessary. Bull kept charging and was shot 4 times by a member of the squad. Checked bull out and [it] was found dead. Brought VN child in charge of bull in. S-5 [civic action officer] will fill out reports on the incident and file VN request for payment.[53]

In the many small, violent clashes with the enemy, the young Marines often demonstrated exceptional valor. On 11 April, for instance, a squad of Company E, 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, was returning from a night ambush about four miles south of Da Nang when it spotted two enemy soldiers carrying an RPG rocket launcher. The Marines fired at them, killing one who fell into a flooded rice paddy. His companion dived into the water and hid in the reeds and brush while the Marines threw grenades into the paddy to flush him out. Lance Corporal Emilio A. De la Garza, Jr., a 20-year-old machine gunner from East Chicago, Indiana, who had enlisted in 1969 and transferred into the battalion from Marine Corps Exchange duty in Da Nang only the previous December, spotted the fugitive. With the aid of his platoon commander and another Marine, De la Garza started to drag the struggling soldier from the paddy. The enemy soldier reached for a grenade and pulled the pin. De la Garza saw the movement and shouted a warning. He pushed the platoon leader and the other Marine aside and himself took the full force of the explosion, suffering mortal wounds. The second VC/NVA was killed and the RPG launcher with two rounds was captured. Lance Corporal De la Garza, the only Marine casualty, received a posthumous Medal of Honor.[54]

The 1st Marines launched an occasional Category III operation. Typical of these and relatively successful was the reconnaissance in force on Charlie Ridge conducted by the 1st Battalion, now commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Charles G. Little, from 15 to 27 April. The operation took place in conjunction with the 51st ARVN's Operation Hung Quang 1/32, a two-battalion sweep in an adjacent area, and was based on intelligence reports which located the headquarters of the *Q-84th Main Force Battalion* and other significant enemy units in the jungled hills and ravines of the Charlie Ridge area.

Charlie Ridge was the name given by allied forces to a complex of brush-covered foothills and jungle-blanketed mountains which overlooked the coastal plain some 12-15 miles southwest of Da Nang. Its large area, rough and broken terrain, and thick vegetation made Charlie Ridge an ideal enemy base camp location, and from it infiltrators could easily enter populated areas to the northeast, east, and south or move to convenient rocket launching sites. Since Operation

Oklahoma Hills in early 1969, major allied units had left Charlie Ridge alone except for air strikes, artillery harrassment and interdiction, and the insertion of reconnaissance teams which confirmed continued heavy enemy use of the area. The NVA and VC had honeycombed the hills with headquarters, supply caches, and base camps protected by bunkers, tunnels, and natural caves. In fact, they had developed a surplus of camps so that if Marine or ARVN units invaded one base complex, the enemy easily could move his men and materiel to another. In the words of a defector:

> The people in the base camp do not worry about allied operations. Forewarning of an attack is obvious at the base camp when FWMAF [Free World Military Armed Forces] conduct air strikes, artillery fire, aerial reconnaissance, and when helicopters fly in the area. When an operation takes place in the vicinity of the base camp, the people simply go further back into the mountains and return when the operation is over.[55]

The 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, which normally operated along the Vu Gia River just south of Charlie Ridge, had conducted a multi-company reconnaissance in force there in February with meager results. Now Little's battalion, aided by a Hoi Chanh* who promised to lead them to the base camp of the *Q-84th*, would test the enemy's defenses again.

The operation began on 14 April when Company C accompanied by the Hoi Chanh left Hill 41 and marched westward into the hills along a known VC trail. Two days later, a provisional battery of four 4.2-inch mortars drawn from the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 11th Marines, with a security detachment from Company C, landed by helicopter on Hill 502, about 14 miles southwest of Da Nang and established Fire Support Base Crawford. On 17 April, three companies—A and B of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines and L of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines (temporarily attached to the 1st Battalion for this operation)—were lifted by helicopters into three separate landing zones south and west of the firebase. The Marines began a careful meter-by-meter search of previously assigned areas for base camps and supply caches.**

As the Marines had expected, the enemy chose not to fight for the area. Although they took several casualties from booby traps, the patrols met only light opposition from snipers and two- or three-man groups of enemy soldiers. The enemy mortared Company B's CP on the night of the 18th with no effect and four days later made a ground probe of Company A's night position. This ended after an exchange of grenades with no casualties on either side. Company C joined the main body around noon on the 22d, after a march during which it caught and killed several individual VC/NVA.

Soon after landing, the Marine patrols began uncovering the bunkers, huts, tunnels, and weapon caches of several extensive base camps, including one which the Hoi Chanh claimed was the headquarters of the *Q-84th Battalion.* On 24 April, a patrol of Company B, following an enemy communications wire unearthed the previous day, walked into the largest camp yet uncovered in the operation and came under fire from about 30 NVA, evidently the rear guard of a sizeable force trying to evade the Marines. The rest of the company reinforced the patrol and assaulted the camp. One Marine was killed as were two NVA, one of whom was identified from papers on his body as the executive officer of the *102d Battalion, 31st NVA Regiment.*

After the fight on the 24th, the operation continued without major incident. On 27 April, the infantry companies left the area by helicopter, and the following day the mortar detachment razed and abandoned FSB Crawford. During the operation, the 1st Battalion had uncovered 10 base camp sites with large quantities of equipment, including 91 individual and 17 crew-served weapons. It had also found significant caches of documents, including a file from the enemy's *Hoa Vang District Headquarters* which contained lists of members of the VC infrastructure in that district. In 11 contacts with an estimated total of 48 VC and NVA, the Marines had killed 13 while losing two of their own men killed and five wounded, mostly by boobytraps. They had been unable to exploit fully their potentially most significant discovery, the base camp entered by Company B on the 24th, because it lay within the AO of the 51st ARVN Regiment. This frustration was experienced all too often in this complex war with its delicate problems of command and control of allied but independent forces.[56]

Each battalion of the 1st Marines regularly called on the fixed-wing and helicopter squadrons of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing for the full range of support

*A VC who voluntarily surrendered and agreed to aid the GVN, actively or passively. The enemy were encouraged to surrender under the "Chieu Hoi" program. English translation is "Open Arms." The program guaranteed enemy soldiers fair treatment and a place in South Vietnamese society.

**On the 18th, while observing the opening phases of this operation, General Wheeler was injured in the crash of his helicopter in one of the 1st Battalion's LZs.

available to a Marine unit. During April 1970, for example, Marine fixed-wing squadrons flew 71 missions at request of the 3d Battalion, including 16 close air support strikes. Attack aircraft supporting the battalion expended 197 tons of bombs and napalm during the month. Helicopters of MAG-16 flew 26 medical evacuations for the battalion and 21 visual reconnaissance missions, besides transporting a total of 526 passengers.[57] The other battalions called for comparable quantities of air support, although the 2d Battalion, operating in a densely populated TAOR, requested few fixed-wing strikes. Instead, during April, it began using a night helicopter patrol, codenamed Night Hawk, which performed a function similar to the daytime Kingfisher. Consisting of a CH-46D equipped with a night observation device and two .50-caliber machine guns and accompanied by two Cobras, the Night Hawk patrolled the TAOR during the hours of darkness hunting targets of opportunity. Unlike Kingfisher the Night Hawk did not include air assault infantry.[58]

The 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, provided direct artillery support for the 1st Marines, with one or more batteries usually assigned in direct support of each battalion. When necessary, other Marine batteries could add their fire, as could warships stationed off the coast. Since the enemy in the 1st Marines' TAOR rarely massed in large groups or maintained contact with the Marines for any length of time, the batteries supporting the regiment delivered mostly harassing and interdiction fire or shelled pre-selected and pre-cleared grids in response to sensor activations or sighting reports from observation posts. The 3d Battalion, 1st Marines whose TAOR consisted mostly of unpopulated mountains and foothills, made the most use of artillery. In April, for instance, artillery supporting this battalion fired 15,914 rounds at harassing and interdiction targets. In addition, naval gunfire provided 2,440 supporting rounds. The 2d Battalion, on the other hand, could use artillery in only a few portions of its heavily populated TAOR.[59]

For the artillery batteries supporting the 1st Marines, and indeed for the regiment itself, a primary mission was the prevention of or quick reaction to VC/NVA rocket attacks on Da Nang. Since 1967, when the rocket attacks began, the Marines had gradually developed a system of prevention and response in which infantry and artillery worked in close coordination and mutual support. To prevent launchings, the regiments guarding the Rocket Belt saturated it with patrols and ambushes; most of the day and night small-unit activities of the 1st and 26th Marines had this as a major objective. The infantry manned or furnished security for observation posts which tried to spot infiltrators coming into the area or, failing that, the flashes of rockets being fired. By carefully plotting the sites of past firings, the Marines had pinpointed many of the enemy's most likely launching positions. They interdicted these each night, either by infantry patrols or by artillery bombardment, sometimes using both against the same area at different times. In the words of Colonel Ralph A. Heywood, Colonel Harrell's predecessor in command of the 26th Marines:

> We protected the Rocket Belt with artillery. We fired . . . some 1100 to 2100 rounds a night, at known . . . rocket launching sites, and every time we'd get a piece of intelligence that would tell us that 100 people are carrying rockets over the hill, why we'd shoot at that also . . . . When we get a sensor reading, we shoot it.[60]

In spite of patrols and artillery fire, the enemy still managed to slip in from the mountains, set up their rockets, and fire, but they did so at their increasing peril. As soon as installations reported impacts or patrols or outposts reported rocket flashes, fire direction centers would order counterbattery fire against previously designated launch sites. The batteries kept their guns aimed at these coordinates when not assigned other targets. Observation posts would then plot from the flashes the estimated firing position, clearance would be requested for the area from Vietnamese authorities, and usually within two to four minutes of the first launching, rounds would begin falling on the launch site and likely enemy escape routes from it. If infantry patrols or ambushes were too close to the plotted position for safe artillery engagement, the nearest patrol would attack at once toward the site.

As soon as possible after the attack, infantry would secure the launching site while a rocket investigating team from the 11th Marines examined it and reported on every aspect of the incident—rocket positions and lauching devices, evidence of advance preparation of the site, estimated number of missiles fired, equipment left on the scene, enemy casualties found, and any other information which might help the Marines prevent future attacks. By mid-1970, this program substantially had reduced both the number of rocket incidents and the number of missiles discharged. At times, quick reaction forced the enemy to leave unfired rockets behind as they fled a site under infantry

or artillery counterattack. Nevertheless, in the first six months of 1970, the VC/NVA still managed to fire 85 rockets into the Da Nang area in 12 separate attacks. These missiles caused allied civilian and military casualties of 28 killed and 60 wounded.[61]

The 5th Marines: Thuong Duc, An Hoa, and Arizona Territory

South of the 1st Marines' TAOR and west of that of the Korean Marines, the 5th Marines defended a TAOR dominated by the confluence of two major rivers. The first of these, the Vu Gia, flows out of the mountains in a generally west-to-east direction through a valley dotted with villages and rice paddies, and overlooked to the north by Charlie Ridge. The major east-west highway, Route 4 (also known as Route 14), runs from Route 1 in the east to the western extremity of the Thuong Duc corridor, which was named after the town and Vietnamese Special Forces camp which guarded its western approaches.

In the flatlands about 10 miles east of Thuong Duc, the Vu Gia River flows into the second major river, the Thu Bon. This river is formed in the western Que Son Valley by the convergence of several smaller streams and bends northwestward and then northeastward to meet the Vu Gia. East of their confluence, the two rivers take on a new name, the Ky Lam. Continuing eastward, the name of the river changes a few more times until it finally meanders past Hoi An through a maze of channels and islets into the South China Sea.

Weary Marines from Company H, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines patrol hoobytrap-infested Go Noi Island. The Marine wearing the cross carries an M60 machine gun.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A374037

The Vu Gia and Thu Bon come together in the midst of a broad plain bounded on the northwest by the foothills of Charlie Ridge, on the west by the mountains of the enemy's Base Area 112, and on the southeast by hills rising into the Que Son Range. Marines called the portion of the plain between the Vu Gia and the Thu Bon the Arizona Territory. South and east of the Thu Bon lies the An Hoa Basin, site of a once-promising industrial project and in 1970 of the 5th Marines' combat base. Northeast of the An Hoa Basin and just south of the Ky Lam River, Go Noi Island, a fertile but enemy infested stretch of hamlets and paddies girdled and cut up by streams, extended from the 5th Marines' TAOR into that of the Korean Marines. From late May to early November 1969, in Operation Pipestone Canyon, the Koreans, along with elements of the 1st Marines and the 51st ARVN Regiment, had scoured Go Noi Island. They rooted the VC and NVA out of tunnels, caves, and trenches from which they had operated for years, killing some 800. Marine engineers and an Army land-clearing platoon then bulldozed the vegetation and crushed bunkers and fortifications. In spite of this and other allied pacification efforts, the VC guerrillas and political infrastructure remained strong in villages throughout the 5th Marines' TAOR, and parties of infiltrators crossed and recrossed it constantly.

The 5th Marines, commanded by Colonel Noble L. Beck until 11 February, then by Colonel Ralph F. Estey, began the year with the 1st Battalion covering the Thuong Duc corridor, the 2d Battalion protecting Liberty Road and Bridge* and conducting reconnaissance in force operations of western Go Noi Island, and the 3d Battalion operating in the Arizona Territory. Late in January, the 3d Battalion exchanged areas

*Liberty Road and Liberty Bridge had been worked on for several years by Marines and Seabees. They provided a direct road link between An Hoa and Hill 55 and Da Nang, vital both for military purposes and for the eventual and still hoped for development of the An Hoa industrial complex. Liberty Bridge, an 825-foot monsoon-proof span across the Thu Bon had been built by the Seabees to replace an earlier bridge washed away by a flood in 1967. It had been open to traffic since 30 March 1969. Simmons, "Marine Operations in Vietnam, 1969-72," p. 129.

of operation with the 1st Battalion, taking over the defense of the Thuong Duc corridor, while the 1st Battalion moved to the Arizona.

The pattern of battalion activities varied in the different areas of operation. In the Thuong Duc corridor, the 1st and then the 3d Battalion guarded the valley and Route 4 from strongpoints on Hills 65, 25, and 52. They saturated the countryside with patrols and ambushes, supported the CUPPs and CAPs working in the hamlets along the highway, and occasionally conducted a Category III operation on Charlie Ridge. The companies of the 2d Battalion manned an outpost at Liberty Bridge and cooperated with Vietnamese RFs, to guard the highway, while launching company-size sweeps into western Go Noi Island. In the Arizona Territory, the battalions defended no fixed positions, since this was and long had been hard-core enemy country. Instead, companies moved continually from place to place, patrolling, setting up night ambushes, and searching for food and supply caches. They conducted frequent multi-company sweeps and set up blocking forces for sweeps by battalions of the 51st ARVN.[62]

In January, the 5th Marines began using Kingfisher patrols, and, as was the case with the 1st Marines, the first few of these operations caught the enemy off balance and produced significant contact. On 13 January, for example, an OV-10 and a ground outpost on the hills west of the Arizona Territory sighted armed enemy near the south bank of the Vu Gia River. An airborne platoon from Captain William M. Kay's Company I, 3d Battalion, landed under fire and engaged them. Captain Kay decided to reinforce the platoon, which seemed to have encountered a large force. Helicopters of Lieutenant Colonel Charles R. Dunbaugh's HMM-364 picked up a second platoon of the Kingfisher company and landed it about two kilometers west of the engaged element. The two platoons then swept toward each other while the OV-10 directed fixed-wing air strikes and the Cobras hunted targets of opportunity. A CH-46D pilot reported that "the enemy on the ground had been caught completely off guard and completely unprepared, and they were . . . just running in every direction."[63] The two-platoon action lasted over two hours. At the end of it, at a cost of two wounded, the Marines had killed 10 enemy and taken one prisoner. They had captured two AK-47s and assorted equipment.[64]

In March, the regiment realigned its battalions in response to the Keysone Bluejay withdrawals. Lieutenant Colonel Johan S. Gestson's 3d Battalion extended its TAOR to the northeast to a point east of Route 1. It defended this enlarged TAOR, which included the strongpoints at Hills 37 and 55, as a combined area of operations with the 51st ARVN Regiment which placed its command post on Hill 55 and occupied Hill 37 with its 3d Battalion. On 6 March, Gestson's battalion also took command of the 1st Marines' CUPP company, Company M, the platoons of which operated in hamlets around Hills 37 and 55. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Colonel Savage's 1st Battalion, moved its companies by helicopter to positions in the SSDC where the battalion, now directly responsible to 1st Marine Division Headquarters, assumed the function of division reserve. To compensate for its departure, the 2d Battalion, under Lieutenant Colonel Frederick D. Leder, enlarged its area of operations to cover the Arizona Territory as well as western Go Noi Island, Liberty Bridge, and the An Hoa Basin. These deployments continued in effect until the next troop withdrawal in late August and September.[65]

From its new positions at Hill 34 and Dai La Pass, the 1st Battalion for the next several months protected the SSDC while providing one or two of its companies in rotation for the division's Pacifier operation. Officially defined as "a swift striking, highly mobile heliborne task force which is able to react to any situation on very short notice," Pacifier consisted of an infantry company and four flights of aircraft each capable of lifting a platoon and almost identical in composition to the Kingfisher package.*[66] Instituted in March, the Pacifier infantry force could go into action on 10 minutes' notice at any time. Its aircraft were kept on standby for takeoff within 15 minutes of the order being given.

While it used a similar aircraft package, the Pacifier differed from Kingfisher in several important respects. The Pacifier functioned more as a reaction force than as a patrol, either striking predetermined targets or responding to ground contacts. Usually a longer time elapsed between the selection of the objective and the actual launching of the mission. Most important, in contrast to Kingfisher, which almost always went into unprepared landing zones, Pacifier missions generally started with air and artillery preparation

*Each Pacifier flight was composed of one UH1E command and control ship, two OV-10s carrying forward air controllers (airborne), three CH-46s for troop transport, two F-4Hs for LZ preparation, two F-4Hs for combat air patrol, and four Cobra gunships.

of the landing site a minimum of 5-10 minutes before the troop carriers arrived. This reduced the danger of ambushes in the landing zone, but, in the opinion of some Marine participants, sacrificed the element of surprise that Kingfisher often gained.*[67]

Between 15 March and 21 June, the 1st Battalion conducted 51 Pacifier operations, usually against preplanned objectives but sometimes to reinforce ground units in contact with the enemy. For example, on 31 May, elements of Company H, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, operating northeast of An Hoa, sighted 18 enemy moving southward. The company at once established a blocking position and called for a Pacifier. Company A of the 1st Battalion, on Pacifier duty that day, responded. With Cobra gunfire and a ground assault, the Pacifier company and Company H killed five VC/NVA, took one prisoner, and captured an AK-47.[68]

On 12 June, the division enlarged Pacifier by adding to it a second rifle company from the reserve battalion with the same aviation support as the first. Later in the month, the battalion began experimenting with multi-company operations in which Pacifier companies and companies from other battalions worked together, directed by a skeleton battalion command post. The first of these took place on 20-21 June in the northern Arizona Territory. Companies B and C of the 1st Battalion cooperated with Company G, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, in a foray which killed several enemy and uncovered caches of corn and weapons. From 23-26 June, the same units launched a second sweep northeast of Liberty Bridge along the Thu Bon River in an area where intelligence indicated the enemy might be massing to attack Hill 55. Although hampered by heat casualties and boobytraps, the companies, supported by four tanks, saturated the area with night ambushes and daylight helicopter operations. Their efforts netted only one NVA/VC killed and one detainee.[69]

While Pacifiers never matched the dramatic surprise contacts of the early Kingfishers, they did reduce the enemy's ability to mass forces within the division TAOR and inflicted substantial casualties. In the period from March to June, Pacifier operations killed 156 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong and captured 18 prisoners and 39 weapons, as well as large quantities of food, ordnance, and documents. Marine casualties in these operations totaled two killed and 21 wounded.[70]

While the 5th Marines' 1st Battalion ran its Pacifiers, Lieutenant Colonel Leder's 2d Battalion pursued the enemy from the Arizona Territory to Go Noi Island. The battalion rotated its companies between relatively static security operations at Liberty Bridge and reconnaissance in force and search and destroy missions. In April, for instance, Company E began the month guarding Liberty Bridge while Company H protected Liberty Road; Company F conducted a reconnaissance in force in the Arizona Territory and Company G acted as regimental reserve with one of its squads positioned at the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion's observation post on Hill 119 northeast of An Hoa. On 8 April, Company G took over protection of Liberty Bridge while Company E switched to guarding Liberty Road. Four days later, Company H began a reconnaissance in force in the Arizona Territory. From 16-20 April, Companies F and H and a battalion command group, supported by an RF platoon from Duc Duc District and four Marine tanks, conducted a search and clear operation in the Arizona area. After the end of this operation, Company F continued patrolling the Arizona until the 27th, when it moved to An Hoa to act as regimental reserve. During the month, some of the companies in turn were helicoptered to Da Nang for 48 hours of rest and recreation.[71]

On 8 May at 0145, Company G while guarding Liberty Bridge came under fire from 60mm and 80mm mortars, B-40 rockets, and small arms, followed by a ground assault by an enemy force of undetermined size. The company drove off the attackers, who wounded 21 Marines and RFs. Anticipating that the enemy would retreat southward from the bridge toward the foothills of the Que Sons, the battalion moved a platoon from Company E to block the route and called in a Pacifier platoon. The Marine units located the withdrawing enemy, engaged them, and killed 10.[72]

During the weeks following the fight at Liberty

*Lieutenant General Bernard E. Trainor, who as a lieutenant colonel commanded the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines in the late summer and fall of 1970, observed, however, that the "Pacifier operations were sufficiently successful in keeping the VC/NVA off balance . . . ." Based on the best available intelligence, a Pacifier element would swoop down upon a selected target: "If a target turned out to be unproductive (a 'dry-hole' in the parlance of the time), little time was wasted beating the bush. The troops would be picked up and a strike would be made on a pre-briefed lower priority alternate target from the list of such targets maintained by the Pacifier." General Trainor concluded that "Over time, the air/ground Pacifier team operated like a well-oiled machine. Detailed orders were never necessary. All hands knew what they were to do—even with the sketchiest intelligence. Common sense proved more useful than the five-paragraph combat order." LtGen Bernard E. Trainor, Comments on draft ms, 22Nov85 (Vietnam Comment File).

Bridge, the 2d Battalion conducted a series of multi-company cordon and search operations. In cooperation with RF/PF elements and units of the National Police Field Force, the battalion tried to move suddenly on hamlets or villages known to be occupied by VC/NVA or enemy sympathizers. On 13 May at first light, the battalion command post with Companies H and F, a RF reconnaissance platoon, and four Marine tanks (often used by the 2d Battalion in these operations to break down vegetation and explode enemy mines in heavily boobytrapped hamlets) cordoned Le Nam (1), a hamlet about two miles southeast of Liberty Bridge. After the Marines surrounded the hamlet, a Marine platoon and the RF platoon together conducted a systematic search. In the words of the battalion report, "The VC/NVA were routed from numerous well concealed spider holes which laced the village." In sporadic fighting, the Marines and RFs killed two enemy and captured 24, three of them NVA doctors, while detaining 65 suspects. They also captured weapons, documents, and large amounts of hospital equipment. As the VC/NVA fled the hamlet, a Pacifier platoon called in by the battalion killed eight more of them.

Four days later, acting on information gained from interrogation of prisoners taken at Le Nam (1), the battalion cordoned and searched the neighboring hamlet of Le Nam (2), again using two of its own companies and this time a PF platoon. Again, they achieved surprise, routing the enemy from his holes and tunnels, killing six and capturing 18 along with rifles, grenades, a radio, documents, and medical gear.[73]

In June, the battalion shifted its cordon and search activities to the Arizona Territory. In an operation lasting from 14-16 June, the battalion command post, with Companies E and G and a National Police Field Force unit, cordoned and searched My Hiep (1) in the northwestern Arizona while a company of the 3d Battalion blocked enemy escape routes north across the Vu Gia River. Lifting into their cordon positions by helicopter just after dawn, the Marines started a careful search of the hedgerows and dense bamboo thickets. In 48 hours, they flushed out and killed three VC/NVA and captured 22, along with a haul of rifles, grenades, and documents. The prisoners taken included four soldiers of the *Q-83d Main Force Battalion* and a number of ranking members of the VC.

On 30 June, the same two companies with an Armed Propaganda Team from Duc Duc District moved in by helicopter to search Football Island, a favorite enemy harboring and food storage area on the west bank of the Thu Bon River about three miles north of An Hoa. After air strikes to prepare the landing area, the command helicopter and the gunships supporting the operation sighted about 20 enemy troops trying to escape across the Thu Bon, some swimming and the rest in a boat. According to the battalion report, "The command and control helicopter immediately took them under fire and then directed the gunships to the target area. In echelons the Cobras directed devastating fire from miniguns and automatic grenade launchers on the helpless and floundering enemy," killing an estimated 15.[74]

In the Thuong Duc corridor and south of Hill 55, Lieutenant Colonel Gestson's 3d Battalion, 5th Marines carried on an unspectacular but steady campaign to keep enemy infiltrators out of the villages and protect Route 4. From fortified positions on Hills 52, 25, 65, and 37, the companies of the battalion saturated the valley daily with squad- and platoon-size ambushes and patrols. They supported daily minesweeps by the engineers along Route 540 (Liberty Road) where it ran southward through the battalion's TAOR past Hill 37, and periodically covered engineer road sweeps westward along Route 4, opening the highway for ARVN truck convoys resupplying the Thuong Duc CIDG camp. In cooperation with CUPP units of both the 1st and 5th Marines, the battalion conducted frequent company-size cordon and search operations of targeted hamlets and villages.

The battalion's contact with the enemy consisted largely of brief, inconclusive exchanges of fire and the discovery or detonation of boobytraps. The boobytrap plague reached such proportions that on 19 April battalion headquarters designated four areas within the TAOR, all of them located east of Hill 65, as too heavily mined for penetration by routine small-unit activities. Operations in these areas were to be conducted only in daylight and with specific authorization from the battalion or a higher headquarters.[75]

The steady routine of small operations inflicted cumulative losses, both friendly and enemy, which over time added up to significant figures. During April, for example, a month typical of the first half of 1970, the battalion claimed a total of 15 VC and NVA killed by its own fire and five more killed by supporting arms. The battalion also captured five AK-47s, eight pounds of documents, and 720 pounds of rice, along with other enemy ordnance and equipment. Its patrols

found 11 boobytraps and detonated seven. During the same period, the battalion lost two Marines killed in action, one dead of wounds, and 37 wounded.[76]

The 3d Battalion shared its area of operations with the ARVN 51st Regiment. The battalions of this regiment were in the field constantly, conducting cordon and search operations, sweeping the hills around the Thuong Duc CIDG camp, and supporting American and ARVN engineer units in clearing and improving the highways. Elements of the 3d Battalion regularly worked in cooperation with the ARVN units. On 7 June, in an unusually successful example of such cooperation, a reinforced Company K took up blocking positions in the Chau Son area about a mile southwest of Hill 55 while three companies of the 51st, supported by armored personnel carriers, swept toward them. At about 1000, the South Vietnamese collided with an estimated platoon of VC. In the ensuing firefight, the ARVN claimed 15 enemy killed and 9 captured along with 5 weapons. Marines of Company K accounted for three more VC trying to escape the ARVN sweep.[77]

Aviation and artillery played important roles in the 5th Marines' operations. Maneuvering in the Arizona Territory in February, the 1st Battalion had attached to it forward air controllers from both fixed wing and helicopter squadrons so that they could "enlighten each other and more readily advise the Battalion about all phases of air support."[78] The battalions employed artillery fire, mostly from the batteries of the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, primarily for harassment and interdiction. In the Thuong Duc corridor, the 1st and later the 3d Battalion coordinated steady shelling of infiltration trails and rocket launching sites on Charlie Ridge, selecting targets from sensor readings and from daily analysis of intelligence reports. Patrols on Charlie Ridge often discovered fresh enemy graves along the trails—mute testimony to the effectiveness of this fire.[79]

Even in this period of low-intensity warfare, the Marines made extensive use of their supporting arms. In April 1970, for example, the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, had 17 close air support missions flown for it, which dropped 76 tons of ordnance and called upon aerial observers and gunships on "numerous" occasions. In the same period, artillery expended 3,051 rounds in fire missions in support of the battalion and 8,927 rounds for harassment and interdiction. In the same month, the 3d Battalion employed 19 tactical air strikes, while the artillery fired over 2,800 rounds in its area of operations. Most artillery missions were fired in response to intelligence reports concerning enemy locations or to interdict movement on trails habitually used by the enemy.[80]

The 7th Marines: The Que Son Mountains

Southeast of the An Hoa Basin, the land rises into the Que Son Mountains. In 1970, this rugged, jungle-covered range began the southwestern portion of the 1st Marine Division TAOR and extended northeastward toward Hoi An. To the south it overlooks the villages and fertile farm land of the Que Son Valley, also known as the Nui Loc Son Basin. From its beginnings at Hiep Duc in the southwest, this valley opens northeastward into the coastal plain. Running through the valley in an easterly and then northeastetly direction, a small river, the Ly Ly, marked the boundary between Quang Nam and Quang Tin Provinces and also between the TAORs of the 1st Marine Division and the Americal Division.

This region had experienced much warfare. The ravines, gorges, and caves of the Que Son Mountains hid extensive enemy base camps and headquarters complexes within easy striking range of the coast. The Que Son Valley, with many of its villages and hamlets controlled by the VC, constituted a major enemy food source. Detachments of VC/NVA combat and supply troops infested the area, and, particularly in its far southwestern reaches, Communist main force elements were to be encountered in substantial strength and willing to fight.

Marines had fought their first battle in the Que Son Valley back in December 1965 in Operation Harvest Moon. They returned in 1966 in Operation Double Eagle and Colorado and again in 1967 in Operation Union, but the area was not part of the 1st Division's TAOR at this time. As North Vietnamese pressure along the DMZ pulled the Marines northward, the Army took over responsibility for it. In August 1969 the Army handed defense of the northern portion of the Que Son Valley back to the Marines, with the Ly Ly Rivet as the new boundary between the 7th Marines and the Americal Division.

Before the boundary between the 7th Marines and Americal Division was moved south from the foothills of the Que Sons to the Ly Ly River, the Marines and Army units encountered many problems controlling enemy movement through the foothills. Major General Lloyd B. Ramsey, who commanded the Americal at the time, recalled why the change was made:

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A374051

Marine SSgt J. W. Sedberry from Company F, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines examines a primitive handcrafted enemy explosive device in a village in "Happy Valley," some 20 miles from Da Nang. Since 1965, Marines found the valley anything but happy.

> Because of the problems we were having due to the boundary being in the hills, I made a recommendation to General Nickerson that either I move north and control the mountains and the valley or the Marines move south. General Nickerson made the decision to move the Marines south. Based on what he told me I believe he was concerned about giving me any more area because I was already overextended – it was just a matter of degree.[81]

The 7th Marines moved into the valley. In January of the following year, the regiment's TAOR included the Que Son Mountains, the northern Que Son Valley, and a portion of the coastal plain sandwiched between the Korean Marines on the north and the Americal Division to the south.[82]

The 7th Marines had inherited three combat bases from the Army, all located on or near Route 535, a highway which runs westward from Route 1 to Que Son District Headquarters. There the road branches, with Route 535 continuing southward into the Americal sector while the northern fork, Route 536, actually little more than a foot path, climbs over a pass through the Que Son Mountains into Antenna Valley* which in turn opens out northwestward into the valley of the Thu Bon River. LZ Baldy, the easternmost of the three bases, located at the intersection of Route 535 with Route 1 about 20 miles south of Da Nang, could accommodate a brigade and was the 7th Marines' Headquarters. Firebase Ross, just west of Que Son District Town, commanded the Que Son Valley while beyond it, FSB Ryder, on its hilltop in the Que Sons, covered both the Que Son Valley and Antenna Valley.

The 7th Marines began the year under the command of Colonel Gildo S. Codispoti. A combat veteran of World War II and Korea who had taken over the regiment early in July 1969, Colonel Codispoti

*How the valley, an ordinary stretch of hamlets and paddies, received this name is not definitely known. According to one story, Marine units operating there had to extend the antennas of their radios in order to communicate with their bases across the high ridges.

continued in command until 1 March 1970. His replacement, Colonel Edmund G. Derning, Jr., a World War II Marine Raider, came to the regiment after tours as Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4, of III MAF and Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, of the 1st Marine Division.

Throughout the first half of 1970, the regiment deployed its battalions to block the enemy's infiltration routes, deny access to the sources of food in the Que Son Valley, engage and destroy combat forces, and find and neutralize base camps. Unlike the 1st and 5th Marines, which assigned each of their battalions a permanent area of operations, each containing a number of fixed installations to be protected, the 7th Marines permanently garrisoned only its three main bases—LZ Baldy and FSBs Ross and Ryder. It divided its TAOR into three large areas of operation. The first of these consisted of the flatlands around LZ Baldy. The Que Son Valley with Firebases Ross and Ryder constituted the second while the third encompassed the Que Son Mountains and the Phu Loc Valley along their northern slope. Operations varied in the three areas of operations dependent upon the terrain and nature of the threat. The 7th Marines rotated battalions between areas, while periodically moving individual companies to the rear for 48 hours' rehabilitation before returning them to the field.

Thus the 2d Battalion protected LZ Baldy and the hamlets around it until the end of January when the 3d Battalion replaced it. In early April, the 1st Battalion took over the area, staying until the end of June. In the Que Son Valley, the 1st Battalion guarded Ross and Ryder until early March when the 2d Battalion came in to remain through June. The Que Son Mountains and the Phu Loc Valley received repeated attention from all three battalions, culminating in late May and early June in a major search and destroy operation by the 3d Battalion.

Under orders from the division, the 7th Marines twice sent units to reinforce the Rocket Belt against predicted enemy offensives. On 24 January, the 2d Battalion redeployed from the Phu Loc Valley to the southern part of the TAOR of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines. It remained there until the end of February. On 27 April, two companies of the 3d Battalion went to the same area, staying for about a month.[83]

In the eastern flats around Baldy and in the Que Son Valley, the battalions concentrated on Category II operations, small-unit patrols and ambushes, to keep the enemy out of the villages and hamlets and to thwart mortar, rocket, and sapper attacks on allied bases. In the Que Son Mountains, the battalions conducted Category III searches for base camps and supply caches to prevent the VC and NVA from massing men and equipment for offensives. In each of these areas of operation, elements of the 7th Marines had frequent and sometimes costly contact with the enemy.

Significant actions occurred quite close to LZ Baldy. About noon on 14 January, for example, a squad from Company F, 2d Battalion, sighted 15 enemy soldiers in an area of rice paddies and treelines two and one-half miles northwest of the base. The Communists were about 100 meters away from the patrol, moving toward the northwest. They wore green uniforms and carried weapons. The Marines fired at them, killing three, and pursued the rest as they fled. Then other enemy opened up on the patrol from three sides with automatic weapons. The fight rapidly expanded. Two other Marine patrols maneuvered to join the action, and came under fire from automatic rifles, machine guns, and grenade launchers. They replied with their own weapons. Company F's commander, First Lieutenant Charles M. Lohman, brought the rest of his company into the fight and called in artillery and air support. Before the action ended, three OV-10s, four helicopter gunships, two F-4 jets, and a Shadow AC-119 gunship had blasted the enemy with machine guns, high explosive and white phosphorous rockets, and napalm. Late in the afternoon, the enemy broke contact and dispersed, leaving behind 10 dead and two AK-47s. Company F had two Marines killed and three wounded.[84]

Smaller contacts around Baldy also took their toll of Marines. In a single day, 26 June, the 1st Battalion had five men killed in supposedly routine patrols and ambushes. One died in a grenade explosion while wrestling with an enemy he was trying to capture; three more were lost in a grenade and machine gun attack on their squad's night position, and another was killed when enemy sappers made a grenade attack on a platoon command post.[85]

In the Que Son Valley, the enemy kept even heavier pressure on the 7th Marines. Here terrain and military/political boundaries favored the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese. About three and one-half miles south of Firebase Ross, a range of hills marks the lower edge of the Que Son Valley. The range includes Nui Loc Son, the ridge that gives the valley its alternate name. Although the boundary between the 7th Marines and the Americal Division had been moved south

to the Ly Ly River, the enemy continued to use foothills along the boundary and areas between Marine and Army operating units to assemble men and supplies for attacks on Firebase Ross and Marines operating in the Que Son Valley.

On 6 January, sappers of the *409th Local Force VC Battalion*, supported by a mortar detachment from an unidentified VC or NVA unit, came out of the southern hills to attack Firebase Ross.[86] American and South Vietnamese intelligence agencies had tracked the sappers' movement northward from their usual area of operation in Quang Tin Province and had warned Ross that an attack might be imminent. On the night of 6 January, the defenders of the base numbered about 560 Marines: Headquarters and Service Company and Companies A and B of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines; Battery K, 4th Battalion, 13th Marines; elements of Battery G, 3d Battalion, 11th Marines; the 2d Platoon, 1st 8-Inch Howitzer Battery, and small detachments of support troops. Although rifle companies normally were not stationed at Ross, Company A had come in from the field to prepare for CUPP duty, and two platoons of Company B had been called in on 5 January in response to the reported enemy threat. The Marines of Company B were to attack southward with two platoons of PFs from Que Son District on the morning of the 6th in an effort to forestall the enemy's anticipated blow.[87]

The enemy struck first. During heavy monsoon rains which masked their approach, between 20 and 30 NVA and VC regulars in five-man teams crept up to the outer perimeter wire and quietly cut their way through at several points. Dressed in black or green shorts and bandannas, barefooted, and laden with grenades and

LCpl Ron J. Barrett rests his feet on a sandbag at Firebase Ross. Barrett, a member of a helicopter support team, is waiting for the resupply helicopter to appear. Marine humor is reflected on the signs above. One reads "LZ Ross, The House of the Rising Sun."

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A372976

satchel charges, they entered the perimeter without alerting the defenders. At 0130, the first rounds of a supporting mortar barrage* exploded on the base and sappers outside the perimeter opened fire with RPGs and small arms. The infiltrators went into action, hurling explosives into bunkers, Southeast Asia huts, offices, and vehicles. They concentrated on the countermortar radar, the battalion combat operations center, and the artillery positions.

The first mortar shells, grenades, and satchel charges caught many Marines asleep in their tents and huts. Some first learned of the attack when explosions hurled them from their bunks or brought roofs and walls down on top of them. Scrambling to collect weapons, helmets, and flak jackets, the Marines—officers, headquarters clerks, radar technicians, artillerymen, and riflemen alike—bolted for bunkers and fighting holes. They began trying to collect and care for their wounded while firing rifles and throwing grenades at sappers who seemed to be everywhere. In the initial confusion, the attackers put the countermortar radar out of action with a grenade in the generator. Perhaps five of them penetrated into the battalion headquarters area. One, spotted near the S-4 hut, shot a Marine sergeant and fled into the showers where other Marines cut him down. Two more walked in the front entrance of the Company A office as the company commander and his chief clerk went out the back door. Immediately thereafter, the office blew up taking the sappers with it, either hit by a mortar shell or destroyed by a charge planted by the sappers.

The defenders rallied rapidly. After clearing out infiltrators of their own living areas, the rifle companies deployed around the perimeter to block further penetrations. Captain Edward T. Clark III, commanding the 1st Battalion's Headquarters and Service Company, ordered his telephone operators and runners to check the perimeter positions and locate any breakthroughs. Then he requested authority from the battalion to send infantry to close the gaps. First Lieutenant Louis R. Ambott, commander of Company B which furnished most of the reaction forces, recalled: "We reacted by pulling squads off the more secure part of our sector of the perimeter and pushing them down head-on into the penetration area and getting it secured and then pursuing with small teams out into the wire to actually kill the enemy as he was running."[88] The quick reaction of the infantry and other units stopped the enemy short of the artillery positions.

Within minutes of the first mortar burst, Marine supporting arms had joined in the action. The gun and mortar batteries at Ross, assisted by batteries at FSB Ryder and LZ Baldy, opened fire on pre-cleared and pre-selected countermortar and other defensive targets, firing hundreds of high explosive, white phosphorous, and illumination rounds. Responding to a report from the PFs at Que Son District Headquarters that enemy reinforcements were massing about 150 meters north of the firebase, Captain Clark "requested a fire mission—81 fire mission—on this position and worked it up and down . . . adjusting it."[89] Preemptive fires of this sort kept the enemy from following up the sappers' initial penetration of the American lines. The low ceiling and the close proximity of friendly villages prevented the defenders from calling in air strikes, but a flareship circled overhead to supplement the artillery in illuminating the battlefield.

After 0330, the fighting diminished. By this time, most of the sappers who had infiltrated the base had been killed and the enemy had not reinforced them. Marines began combing the firebase for hidden survivors while helicopters landed to pick up the wounded. Throughout the rest of the night, Marines in bunkers on the perimeter continued to spot and fire at movement, but the attack was over. Shortly after dawn, around 0700, two platoons of Company B swept the outer defenses, finding a total of 38 enemy bodies and bringing in three prisoners. The enemy had left behind large amounts of weapons and ordnance, including 11 AK-47s, 5 RPG launchers and 6 rockets, 30 satchel charges, over 200 grenades (most of them homemade from soft drink and fruit juice cans), and 4 bangalore torpedoes. The Marines also counted their own losses—13 killed, 40 wounded and evacuated, and 23 slightly wounded. Material losses included the countermortar radar disabled, two trucks heavily damaged, a 106mm recoilless rifle put out of action, and a number of tents, huts, and other structures demolished. The poor quality of the enemy's ordnance, much of which had failed to explode, and confusion among the attackers after the initial penetration had prevented worse destruction.[90]

The day after the attack, the Marines at Ross began

*According to prisoners interrogated after the action, the sappers had not been told a mortar barrage was planned and were thrown into confusion when it began. Marines saw several enemy inside the perimeter killed by shells from their own mortars. Peters Intvw

strengthening their defenses, their efforts spurred by intelligence reports that the enemy planned to attack again. They strung more wire, installed new sensors and radars, and set up a 40-foot tower equipped with a night observation device and a 106mm recoilless rifle. Although the enemy did not repeat the attack, it had left a vivid impression on many Marines at the base. A crewman on the countermortar radar summed up the lesson learned: "that no matter where you are and no matter how secure you may feel, . . . you have to retain the capability of actually fighting hand-to-hand right in front of you."[91]

This lesson was reemphasized a little over a month later, on 12 February, when one of the units that had repelled the attack on FSB Ross again encountered enemy troops in the southern Que Son Valley. On that day, Lieutenant Ambort's Company B, 1st Battalion, was conducting a sweep along the Ly Ly River south-southeast of Ross in a temporary extension of the Marine TAOR into the Americal area, searching for the sites from which enemy .50-caliber machine guns had been firing at allied aircraft. The Marines of Company B were also trying to verify intelligence reports that located the the *31st NVA Regiment* in the region.

At 0935 on the 12th, about five miles from the firebase, Company B's 2d Platoon was moving in column toward the east along a trail close to the south bank of the Ly Ly. The Marines came under fire from an enemy light machine gun to their front.[92] The gun crew fired a couple of bursts which hit no Marines but knocked out the lead squad's radio, then picked up their weapon and disappeared into the brush. Then the Marines began receiving automatic weapon fire from their right. Four or five men pushed through the bushes beside the trail in an effort to locate and silence the new attackers. Coming out into a small paddy no more than 25 meters square and bordered by treelines, these Marines met deadly accurate small arms fire which quickly killed two of them and wounded another. The survivors, flat on the ground, could not move and could not see where the fire was coming from. Other members of the platoon, including a staff sergeant and two Navy corpsmen, ran into the paddy to aid the first group and were themselves cut down. The rest of the Marines took cover at the edge of the trail and tried to bring rifle, M60 machine gun, and an M79 grenade launcher fire to bear on the attackers.

Company B had collided with an estimated platoon of 20-40 NVA regulars in carefully prepared and concealed positions. The NVA had caught the company in flat ground with the Ly Ly River to the Marines' left (north) and a brush-covered hill mass to their right (south). A light machine gun north of the river with perhaps a squad of riflemen blocked flanking maneuvers to that side while snipers on the slopes of the southern hill mass closed off another line of advance. The enemy's main fighting position consisted of a series of deep, well-hidden holes in the treelines bordering the small paddy, many of which were no more than 20 feet from the Marines. The holes were connected underground by tunnels through which the NVA could shift position or flee the area as they chose. They were arranged in the form of a "T" with the crossbar perpendicular to the company's line of march and with the vertical bar so placed that NVA could fire from it either into the small paddy where the Marines ini-

Marine Corps Historical Collection

A Marine resupply helicopter is about to land at Fire Support Base Ryder. A member of the helicopter support team is in communication with the aircraft.

tially were caught or into other paddies to the south between their position and the hills. The 2d Platoon had entered the "T" from the bottom. As Lieutenant Ambort later summed it up: "It was beautifully set up and very, very well executed. They held and fought and stayed there."[93]

Lieutenant Ambort formed his other available platoon in a north-south line along the western edge of the paddy where his forward elements were fighting with the intention of outflanking and driving off the NVA. The fire from the enemy's flanking positions blocked these efforts. The NVA in their fighting holes fired only when a Marine tried to move out into the paddy or otherwise broke covet, making it difficult fot either platoon to find targets.

Reinforcements and supporting arms broke the deadlock. The battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Charles G. Cooper, informed of the situation by Lieutenant Ambort, ordered First Lieutenant James D. Deare's Company C to land by helicopter west of Company B's position and attack eastward along the north bank of the Ly Ly while two companies of the Americal Division's 3d Battalion, 21st Infantry, 196th Brigade, would move in from the southeast and east to envelop the enemy. The 2d Platoon commander called for artillery, and within minutes of the start of the fight, the shells fell in the treelines to the front and flanks. A tactical observer arrived overhead soon afterward and directed Cobra gunships and flight after flight of jets against suspected NVA positions. The enemy in the treelines were too close to the Marines for bombing or napalming, so the jets concentrated on the hill mass to the south and silenced the snipers there while the Cobras strafed the treelines as near the Marines as safety would allow. The air strikes and gunships suppressed enemy fire enough for the 2d Platoon to pull its dead and wounded out of the paddy and recover their weapons and ammunition. The platoon then withdrew about 200 yards to the west to await helicopters which had been called in to evacuate the casualties.

Around 1300, helicopters, still under sporadic fire in the landing zone, began lifting out Company B's dead and wounded. A few minutes later, Company C arrived and started its attack north of the rivet. The enemy broke contact, slipping off the battlefield through their tunnels and then probably withdrawing eastward. They left behind four dead. Company B's 3d Platoon now advanced into the hill mass to follow up the air strikes. They found and killed two more NVA. The enemy then struck at the Marines one last time. Company C, after sweeping for a distance along the north side of the Ly Ly, turned and attempted to cross to the south bank, only to receive automatic weapons fire from the east. The fire killed two more Marines and wounded several. The company returned fire, called for air strikes on the suspected enemy positions, and pulled back to the north bank. At the day's end, the Marines counted 13 killed and 13 more wounded, nine of the dead and eight of the wounded in Company B.

The following day, 13 February, Companies B and C and two companies of the 3d Battalion, 21st Infantry, 196th Brigade swept the battle area along the Ly Ly. They shot two enemy stragglers, but the main NVA units clearly had made good their withdrawal. About a month later, from 9 to 16 March, the 1st Battalion returned to the banks of the Ly Ly. With three of its own companies, a company from the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, two Army companies, and a RF unit, the battalion conducted another search for elements of the *31st NVA Regiment.* The troops uncovered several bunkers and ordnance caches, had a few small firefights, and lost some men wounded by boobytraps but encountered no major enemy force.[94]

Firebase Ross and the valley and hills south of it continued to feel enemy pressure after the 7th Marines' 2d Battalion took over responsibility for the area early in March. Significant enemy units at times approached close to the base. On 24 April, for example, Company H of the 2d Battalion encountered an estimated company of NVA troops only two miles southwest of the firebase and between it and the Marines. In an engagement that lasted for about five hours, Company H, aided by artillery fire, airstrikes, and a Pacifier reinforcement, forced the NVA to flee in groups to the northeast and southeast, leaving six dead behind. The Marines had six wounded and an accompanying RF unit lost two more wounded.[95]

In an effort to reduce civilian support for the enemy in the Que Son Valley, the 2d Battalion in mid-April committed three of its rifle companies to an ambitious pacification program. Each company, supported by a RF platoon and a few National Policemen, was assigned one or more target hamlets, most of them VC-controlled, in the countryside north, west, and south of Firebase Ross. By day, the companies were to surround their target localities, allowing only permanent residents, who were identified by a special census and issued passes, to enter or leave. At night, the

companies would saturate the approaches with patrols and ambushes. While these measures were geared to prevent the enemy from moving in and out of the hamlets, the South Vietnamese Government, with American assistance, would try to win the people away from the VC through medical aid, propaganda, and the other well-tried methods of pacification. The battalion continued this program through the end of June with indications of progress but, as so often in the complex process of pacification, no dramatic or definitive results.*[96]

During April, May, and June, the enemy repeatedly hit Firebase Ross and the neighboring Que Son District Town with rocket and mortar fire. On 3 May, for instance, they fired five 122mm rockets and 28 82mm mortar rounds into the area, killing eight Vietnamese and wounding 12 Vietnamese and five Marines. The Marines replied with artillery cannon and mortar fire on suspected attack positions and withdrawal routes. Recalling the attack of 6 January, the 2d Battalion's commanders—Lieutenant Colonel Arthur E. Folsom until 9 April and then Lieutenant Colonel Vincent A. Albers, Jr.—carefully maintained and strengthened the fortifications of Ross. Beginning in March, they required all off-duty Marines at the firebase to sleep at their night defensive positions rather than in tents or huts. This measure at once increased readiness to repel ground assaults and reduced the number of casualties from rocket and mortar fire.[97]

Enemy sappers did not try a second attack on Firebase Ross, instead around 0300 on 6 May they struck Que Son District Headquarters. At the same time, they fired a diversionary mortar and rocket barrage and made a light ground probe at Ross. The diversion failed. While the RFs and headquarters personnel at Que Son battled the attackers, a reaction force of 20 Marines from the 2d Battalion's Headquarters and Service Company supported by two tanks left the firebase at 0345 to assist them. Later in the night, Company H also moved into Que Son. In about two hours of skirmishing, the Marine and Air Force fixed-wing strikes killed 20 VC and NVA at a cost of five Marines wounded. Que Son's South Vietnamese defenders claimed another seven enemy killed. The attack, however, had been costly. Besides the wounded Marines, U.S. Army personnel at Que Son had suffered one dead and nine injured while the Vietnamese had 14 soldiers and 74 civilians wounded and an "unknown" number of civilians killed.[98]

Besides mortar, rocket, and sapper attacks, the enemy in the hills south of Ross continually harassed the Marines with accurate sniper fire. The snipers' favorite positions were on the slopes of Hills 270 and 441 respectively, about two and one-half and four miles southwest of the firebase. Here, hidden by rocks, caves, and brush, they made operations on the valley floor hazardous for allied troops. The Marines used infantry sweeps, artillery fire, and air strikes to suppress the snipers, but they proved "very skillful and tenacious," and operations against them were hindered because Hill 441 was outside the Marine division's TAOR.

The 7th Marines established Outpost Lion on top of Hill 270, but even this did not end the sniper threat, as the events of 9 June demonstrated. Around 0910 on that day, a CH-53D from HMH-463, on a routine supply mission to the outpost, received four rounds of small arms fire from snipers on the southwestern slopes of Hill 270. The 3d Platoon of Company E, operating in the area, replied with machine guns and recoiless rifles. About an hour later, the platoon again exchanged shots with the snipers. In the afternoon, a squad from Company E on a sweep of the snipers' suspected morning location called for medical evacuation for two heat casualties. Reaching the Marines' position around 1330, the medevac helicopter, a CH-46D from HMM-161, came under heavy automatic weapons fire in the landing zone and took a number of hits, one of which severed a hydraulic line and forced the helicopter to land. Infantry from Company E set up security around the downed helicopter while gunships raked the suspected hiding places of four or five snipers still clinging to the slopes of Hill 270.

The gunships' fire kept the snipers' heads down long enough for another helicopter to come in and pick up the heat casualties, but later in the afternoon they surfaced again. At about 1600, a CH-46D, again from HMM-161, brought in a team to prepare the downed helicopter to be lifted out by a CH-53. As the team landed, their helicopter drew fire and lifted away with two hits. Two and one-half hours later, when the CH-53D from HMH-463 came in to complete the recovery, the snipers drove it off with fire, wounding the crew chief and the gunner. The day ended with Marine jets dropping napalm on the slopes of the hill and Company E planning to sweep the area at first light. They made the sweep early the next morning, but that afternoon, the snipers opened up again, this

*For further details on this effort in the general context of pacification, see Chapter 9.

time at an infantry platoon, and wounded one Marine. Thus the frustrating, deadly struggle went on.[99]

In the Que Son Mountains, the 7th Marines kept offensive pressure on the enemy, seeking to deny them use of this well established refuge. Typical of this kind of operation was the search and destroy mission conducted by Lieutenant Colonel Gerald C. Thomas, Jr.'s, 3d Battalion from 26 May through 12 June. The regiment ordered this movement in response to information from an enemy defector who pinpointed the locations of several hospitals and base camps. On D-Day, 26 May, Company I of the battalion flew by helicopter from Baldy to Landing Zone Crow on top of Hill 800 about five miles northwest of Firebase Ross. At the same time, the rest of the battalion with two platoons and a fire direction center from the mortar battery of the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, landed by helicopter upon Landing Zone Buzzard on Hill 845 about one mile northeast of LZ Crow. Both landing zones had been secured the day before by teams from the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion. While elements of one company and the mortar platoons set up a fire support base at LZ Buzzard, the other rifle companies began searching the hills for enemy troops and installations. If they needed it, they could request artillery support from the mortars at Buzzard and from Battery G, 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, located at FSB Ryder. Besides providing fire to assist the infantry, this battery coordinated all artillery support for the operation. Tactical air observers were also on station to direct fixed-wing strikes if necessary.[100]

The rifle companies established patrol bases and from them dispatched platoons and squads to comb the area. Usually in single file, the Marines toiled through the rough terrain. They found movement up and down the sides of the steep ridges almost impossible and often had to follow the contours of the land along ridge tops or the bottoms of ravines. In many places, they had to use ropes to hoist their mortars and other heavy equipment up and down almost vertical slopes. Extreme heat aggravated conditions, causing most of the casualties during the first few days of the operation.[101]

As they struggled through the mountains, the Marines began to find what they were looking for. First Lieutenant Wallace L. Wilson Jr., commanding Company I's 1st Platoon, described the trials and successes of his men:

> After we landed on Hill 800 and walked down on the southeast side, we stayed down there for a couple of days checking out the area. We didn't find anything of significance—found a couple of bodies that had been buried approximately a month. Then we got word to move out in search of a comm center and having almost reached this comm center we found that the Chieu Hoi had decided that it wasn't in this place and he gave us another coordinate on the other side of the mountain. So my platoon was placed in the lead to go back and find our way over the mountain. As we started moving over the mountain we came to an enemy base camp, started seeing bunkers, well fortified, well positioned; moved on and up, found this cave complex, checked it out, found a considerable amount of ordnance, gear, no weapons—only documents, gear, chow . . . . Next day we moved on over Hill 845, started down on the northwest side. After staying there for a couple of days [we] started to move out. My platoon again found another complex. This time they found 12 SKS's, several light submachine guns, one light machine gun, approximately 1,000 pounds of corn, 750 pounds of potatoes, lots of documents . . . . There was also some graves in this area. We found some mortar rounds that were booby trapped in these caves. We . . . destroyed all this as we left.[102]

Another company found the communications center, and daily the Marines unearthed additional camps with caches of ordnance, food, and equipment. Most of these installations were so well camouflaged that the Marines were unaware of their existence until they walked into them. The enemy had usually built their camps at the bottoms of ravines or the bases of cliffs. In these locations, streams provided water; the jungle concealment; and caves and clusters of boulders protection against American artillery and airstrikes. Some of the camps "even had running water coming in from bamboo water devices to bring water down from the higher ground."[103] The camps were often protected by cleverly concealed and mutually supporting bunkers from which, a platoon leader reported, "12 men can chew a whole battalion up."[104]

Early in June, the battalion, which had had its companies working generally northwest of its initial landing zones, began shifting them southward through the hills by foot and helicopter. On 2 June, Company I was lifted out of the mountains altogether, moving to the Rocket Belt to reinforce the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, against a possible enemy offensive. A week later, the company returned to the Que Sons, landing from helicopters on Hill 848 just southeast of LZ Crow then working its way overland to Hill 953 a mile or so further south. The same day, the battalion command post and Company L were airlifted to another hilltop a mile or so south of LZ Buzzard while Company K continued to operate around Buzzard. On 9 June, the battalion dispatched Company M to Fire-

base Ross to reinforce its defenders against a threatened attack. The rest of the battalion, in the final phase of the operation, marched southeast down the ravines toward the valley floor northwest of Ross.[105]

Up to this point, the enemy had offered little resistance to the Marines other than to boobytrap campsites and trails. One of these early in the operation disabled the battalion's Hoi Chanh guide. As the companies moved down the slopes toward the valley floor, however, the enemy struck at them, concentrating on Captain John C. Williams's Company I. On 11 June, a patrol from the company ran into two NVA in bunkers near Hill 953. The enemy's opening bursts of automatic fire killed the point man and wounded the Marine behind him. Moving to assist the patrol, the company's reaction force also took fire. The Marines worked their way around the flanks of the bunkers, threw grenades, and managed to pull their casualties to safety. Then they called in air strikes and artillery which silenced the bunkers. After the fight, Marines searching the bunkers found one dead NVA with an AK-47.

The following day, as the company moved down the mountain with each of its platoons following a separate ridge line or stream bed, the 1st Platoon twice came under sniper and automatic weapon fire, losing three men wounded. In the second and more severe contact, the enemy poured in automatic and RPG fire from both front and flank of the Marines. In each encounter, the platoon's own fire plus shelling and bombing by the supporting arms forced the enemy to withdraw, but after the second action the platoon shifted to a less sharply contested line of march into the valley.[106] The commander of another platoon commented: "They're pretty weak at this time. If you move into an area with a battalion or a company intact, they won't fight, but anything less than a company and they feel pretty free and easy about continuing contact."[107]

As the companies reached the valley floor late in the day on 12 June, Company I's 2d Platoon set up its night perimeter within 50 meters of a company-size enemy base camp occupied at the time by about 50 VC or NVA. The Marines had moved in quietly, and the thick undergrowth prevented either side from immediately discovering the other. Within a few minutes, however, three of the enemy blundered into the Marine position and a fire-fight erupted. The enemy fled and the platoon pursued them while calling for air strikes. Three flights attacked the scattering enemy, but most of them had reached cover before the aircraft arrived, and some of the aircraft by accident almost hit the pursuing Marines.[108]

On 13 June, the battalion assembled in the Que Son Valley and the operation ended. It had netted nine VC/NVA killed, while capturing four prisoners, 44 weapons, and over two tons of food and medical supplies. The battalion moved back to LZ Baldy and began Category II activities in the region southeast of it. On 22 June, Company I, reinforced with an additional rifle platoon, an engineer team, and a forward air controller, returned to LZ Buzzard to resume search and destroy operations under a plan to keep one company in rotation continually in action in the Que Sons.[109]

Throughout the first half of 1970, the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, provided most of the artillery support for the 7th Marines. With its headquarters and usually one or two batteries at Baldy, the battalion kept one battery each at Ross and Ryder. Reinforcing the 3d Battalion, Battery K of the 4th Battalion, 13th Marines (redesignated in January Battery K, 4th Battalion, 11th Marines) operated from Firebase Ross, and the 1st 8 inch Howitzer Battery had a platoon stationed at Ross and a second at Baldy. Occasionally, the battalion displaced a unit to a temporary firebase, as it did in May in sending two mortar platoons from Baldy to LZ Buzzard. The battalion also regularly rotated its gun batteries between Baldy, Ross, and Ryder.[110]

Early in May, in order to support the infantry more effectively, the 3d Battalion altered its firing policy. When firing in aid of troops in contact with the enemy, the battalion's batteries, as standard procedure, had used a first volley of white phosporous (WP) shells to register on the target. This practice, 7th Marines infantrymen complained, warned the VC or NVA that shells were on the way and gave them time to escape. The 3d Battalion, therefore, instructed its gunners to begin firing first volleys of high explosive unless specifically asked to use WP by the forward observer. According to the artillery battalion, "the new procedure worked well in practice, and the change was enthusiastically received by the infantry units."[111]

Like the other regiments, the 7th Marines employed the full range of Marine air support, from jet air strikes to helicopter troop transport, medical evacuation, and resupply. The 2d Battalion, while defending Firebase Ross and the Que Son Valley, called for and received numerous close air support strikes. In June, for example, aircraft of the 1st MAW flew 31 attack missions for the 2d Battalion, dropping over 450,000 pounds

of ordnance.[112] During May and June, the period of its Que Son Mountains operation, the 3d Battalion requested and received 23 fixed-wing close air support missions. Helicopters of MAG-16 airlifted each member of the battalion an average of three times, carried out 95 medical evacuations, and delivered over 250,000 pounds of cargo.[113]

Throughout the first half of 1970, the 7th Marines regularly accounted for about half of the division's monthly totals of contacts with the enemy and of claimed VC and NVA killed. At the end of June, after six months of operations in the lowlands around Baldy, in the Que Son Valley, and in the enemy's mountain sanctuaries, the 7th Marines reported a total of over 1,100 engagements with VC or NVA units. In these actions, the regiment had killed an estimated 1,160 enemy, taken 44 prisoners, and captured 291 weapons. These accomplishments had cost the 7th Marines over 950 combat casualties, including 120 Marines killed in action or dead of wounds.[114]

Results

Measurement of the results of six months of small-unit action in relation to the overall progress of the war was not an easy task. The war as the Marines were fighting it had become a slow contest in attrition, seemingly to be won or lost by accumulated tiny increments. By the mid-point of 1970, the 1st Marine Division could point to many indications that it was hurting the enemy worse than it was being hurt. Casualty statistics offered an indication: a claimed 3,955 VC and NVA killed within the Marines' TAOR as against 225 Marines killed in action, 58 more dead of wounds, and 2,537 wounded, to which, however, had to be added ARVN and Korean casualties. The Marines could also point to captured enemy materiel: 826 individual and 76 crew-served weapons, tons of rice and foodstuffs, countless rounds of assorted ammunition, rockets, medical supplies, and communications equipment.[115] They could add the count of base camps, hospitals, and other installations destroyed, installations the enemy would have to replace instead of building more to increase his capabilities. Captured documents, taken a few at a time from the bodies of enemy dead and prisoners or seized in larger quantities in camps and caves, would often add to the mosaic allied intelligence was trying to build of enemy strength and intentions, and also would expand the list of hidden VC terrorists and operatives in the hamlets.

An operations summary prepared late in June by the 1st Marine Division's G-3 suggested another and perhaps more reliable indication of progress:

> . . Unlike other wars, and even other areas in South Vietnam, the success of combat action in Quang-Nam Province cannot be measured in terms of numbers of enemy killed. Rather, effectiveness of 1st Marine Division operations must be considered in light of the relative safety of Da Nang City and the security of the surrounding populace. Some indication of this security is evidenced by the fact that for the past two years the enemy has made no serious attempt to inflict major damage on the Da Nang Vital Area. Even the occasional enemy massacre of [the inhabitants of] a village, as horrible and regrettable as it may be, must be viewed in perspective of the relatively secure position of the total civilian populace in the lowlands of the Division TAOR . . . .[116]

CHAPTER 3

The Cambodia Invasion and Continued Redeployment Planning, April-July 1970

The War Spreads Into Cambodia—Redeployment Planning Accelerates: Keystone Robin Alpha Plans for the 3d MAB

The War Spreads into Cambodia

While the day-to-day war absorbed the full attention of most of the officers and men of III MAF, commanders and staff officers at MAF, division, and wing headquarters, besides directing current operations, had to keep track of developments elsewhere in the war and plan for events and contingencies as much as a year away. During the spring and early summer of 1970, the attention of these officers centered on three problems: the probable effects in I Corps of the allied invasion of Cambodia; plans and preparations for major new troop withdrawals; and the organization of the Marine air and ground forces that would be left in Vietnam after most of III MAF redeployed.

During the spring, the allies opened a new theater of war in Cambodia, South Vietnam's neighbor to the west. They acted in response to the collapse of Cambodia's long maintained but increasingly precarious neutrality. In March, the Cambodian premier, General Lon Nol, led a successful *coup d'etat* against the country's ruler, Prince Norodom Sihanouk. When the new government tried to expel the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong from the extensive base areas they had built up on the Cambodian-Vietnamese border, fighting broke out between government troops and the NVA and VC, who were assisted by the growing forces of the Communist-inspired Khmer Rouge movement.

The American and South Vietnamese high commands had long wanted to strike at the border base areas only 35 miles from Saigon. Taking advantage of the Cambodian upheaval, the allies, beginning on 29 April, sent division and brigade-size task forces slashing into what had been enemy sanctuaries. During May, the U.S. Army and the ARVN carried on search and destroy operations in a dozen base areas adjoining the II, III, and IV Corps areas of South Vietnam. A U.S.-Vietnamese naval task force* commanded by Rear Admiral Herbert S. Matthews, Deputy Commander Naval Forces Vietnam (ComNavForV) at the same time swept up the Mekong River to open a supply line to Cambodia's besieged capital, Pnomh Penh. The fighting continued through June. At the end of that month, in accord with a promise by President Nixon that this would be a limited attack for the sole purpose of preventing enemy offensives against South Vietnam, all U.S. ground troops left Cambodia. ARVN units continued to range the base areas, however, and American arms and supplies flowed to the ill-trained and hard-pressed forces of General Lon Nol.

While bitterly controversial in American politics, the invasion of Cambodia seriously weakened the enemy. By early July, MACV estimated that the Communists had lost as a result of the invasion 10,000 men, over 22,000 weapons, 1,700 tons of munitions, and 6,800 tons of rice. According to allied intelligence, the attack had forced *COSVN Headquarters* to displace, causing the enemy to lose command and control of many of their units in South Vietnam. Destruction of the base areas combined with Lon Nol's crackdown on pro-Communist elements in Cambodia had left the NVA and VC in southern South Vietnam temporarily without sufficient supplies for a major offensive. Replenishment of the Cambodian caches with material brought down the Ho Chi Minh Trail through Laos would require much time and the commitment to supply operations of thousands of additional troops and laborers. Further weakening their position, the NVA now had to use their own soldiers to control a large portion of northeastern Cambodia as well as to support Khmer Rouge units.[1]

The invasion of Cambodia had little immediate impact on conditions in I Corps. Of the allied forces there, only Marine aviation units participated in the invasion. During May and June, jets from MAGs-11 and -13 flew 26 missions over Cambodia, most of them in support of the U.S. Army's 4th Division and the ARVN 22d Division as they swept an enemy base area about 40 miles west of Pleiku. Other Marines, advisors to the Vietnamese Marine brigades, accompanied the Mekong River task force.*[2]

*According to Admiral Matthews, the supply line up the Mekong River to Pnomh Penh remained open until January 1971 when heavy interdiction by the VC necessitated a second Vietnamese task force to reopen it. RAdm Herbert S. Matthews, Comments on draft ms, 3Mar83 (Vietnam Comment Files).

*For details of air operations, see Chapter 15, and for the Marine advisory role see Chapter 21.

While Marine forces took only a limited part in the invasion, officers on the XXIV Corps and III MAF staffs closely scanned the intelligence reports for indications of what effect the opening of this new front would have within their own area of responsibility. Colonel George C. Fox, a member of the III MAF Staff, early in May summed up the staff's thinking in these words:

> The question I think that most of us have in I Corps, whether we've stated it openly or whether we haven't, is . . . supposing the enemy isn't willing to take this thing laying down, he can't react in III Corps and he sure can't react in IV Corps, so where does he have to go? He's got to go to II Corps where he's got nothing or I Corps where he has a lot. So there's a feeling amongst us that we could see a pickup of activity in I Corps, if he wants to do it, and I'm talking particularly of northern I Corps, across the D[MZ] and in through the A Shau Valley . . . .[3]

Estimates of enemy strength in northern and central I Corps gave the allies cause for concern. By early summer, 19 Communist battalions were reported in Quang Tri Province, 20 in Thua Thien, and 16 in Quang Nam. Many of the units in Quang Tri and Thua Thien had moved in since the beginning of the year and remained in mountain base areas for training, refitting, and stockpiling of supplies. Supported from North Vietnam via the Ho Chi Minh Trail, they retained the ability to launch large-scale attacks.[4]

True to their pattern, however, the NVA seemed content merely to maintain the threat. While they displayed occasional instances of aggressiveness during

President Richard M. Nixon prepares to board Marine 1, the Presidential Helicopter from Marine Helicopter Squadron (HMX) 1. The President ordered the accelerated redeployment of U.S. forces from Vietnam simultaneously with the incursion into Cambodia.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A419542

Marine Corps Historical Collection

Gen Creighton Abrams, USA, Commander, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam is seen in a formal ceremony at XXIV Corps Headquarters. Gen Abrams, in overall command, oversaw the planning of the withdrawal of U.S. forces in Vietnam.

the spring, such as harassment of the new allied Fire Support Base Ripcord 35 miles west of Hue and attacks on the villages of Hiep Duc and Thuong Duc in Quang Tin and Quang Nam Provinces respectively, the Communists mounted no major offensive.[5] Nevertheless, the possibility of such an offensive remained and had to be taken into account as the commanders in Vietnam entered into a new discussion of troop redeployments with the authorities in Washington.

Redeployment Planning Accelerates: Keystone Robin Alpha

On 30 April, in his speech announcing the raids into Cambodia, President Nixon told the American people that the operation would pave the way for continued and accelerated U.S. troop withdrawals from Vietnam. In fact, planning for additional redeployments had begun in Washington and Saigon even before the last personnel of Keystone Bluejay boarded homebound ships and planes.

Throughout the first months of 1970, the now familiar dialogue recurred between General Abrams and the authorities in Washington, the latter pressing for early additional withdrawals and Abrams urging delay. Abrams asked that no more American units be scheduled for removal until late summer or early fall. The allies, he insisted, still needed reserves to deter or counter a major offensive, which the enemy remained capable of launching. The South Vietnamese needed time to enlarge and reposition their forces to replace the Americans removed in Keystone Bluejay, and it would take several months to embark all of the equipment which was to accompany the personnel of Keystone Bluejay.

In anticipation of new withdrawals, MACV in February prepared plans for redeploying 150,000 men during 1970 in three increments of 50,000 each, with the scheduling of each increment to be decided later. If implemented, these plans would leave about 260,000 Americans—mainly service and support troops—in Vietnam at the year's end.[6]

Under MACV's plans, the first 50,000 men to go would include most of the Marines of III MAF. As before, MACV preferred a "Marine-heavy" first increment because it would allow them to send aviation units home early while retaining more Army ground troops until the very last stages of redeployment. Marine planners now assumed that the Marines' combat role in Vietnam probably would end late in 1970. They intended to organize the 10,000 or so Marines remaining after the next withdrawal into a Marine amphibious brigade (MAB)—a balanced air-ground force built around a reinforced infantry regiment and two air groups, one of fixed-wing aircraft and one of helicopters.[7]

On 20 April, only 10 days before the invasion of Cambodia, President Nixon established the framework for withdrawal planning for the rest of the year. In a nationally broadcast Vietnam "Progress Report" to the American people, Nixon declared that while negotiations at Paris remained deadlocked, encouraging advances had been made in training and equipping the ARVN and in pacification. Therefore, he said, the United States could safely adopt a longer-range and larger-scale withdrawal program. He announced that 150,000 Americans would leave Vietnam before 1 May 1971. The President made no mention of a schedule for this redeployment, but on 27 April Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird ordered the withdrawal of 50,000 men by October. The 150,000-man redeployment soon received the codename Keystone Robin, and its first increment was called Keystone Robin Alpha.[8]

During May and early June, MACV and the Joint Chiefs of Staff debated various ways to apportion the 150,000 troops into withdrawal increments. Throughout, they remained committed to a pull-out of 50,000 by 15 October. MACV, still in favor of a Marine-heavy withdrawal, suggested early in May that almost 30,000 Marines (two full regimental landing teams and a proportional slice of the wing) be included in the first 50,000 troops. To retain adequate combat power in I Corps, neither RLT was to begin preparations for embarkation until early September. Lieutenant General McCutcheon objected that this plan would not permit the necessary balanced removal from action of combat and support units and that it could not be executed with the available shipping. If two RLTs were to leave by 15 October, he insisted, one must stand down as early as 15 July. By the end of May, MACV had tentatively decided to remove only 20,000 Marines, including one RLT, in Keystone Robin Alpha and to redeploy 9,400 more (a second RLT) in the expected second Keystone Robin withdrawal (Keystone Robin Bravo) between 15 October and 1 January. This would leave in-country about 12,600 Marines of the MAB and a logistic cleanup force which would probably stay until mid-1971.[9]

By 30 May, the III MAF staff had drafted tentative troop lists for two withdrawal increments, the first to be completed by 15 October and the second by 1 January. The first list included the 7th Marines; its support artillery, the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines; and three fixed-wing and two medium helicopter squadrons. The 5th Marines headed the second list, which included the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines; two fixed-wing squadrons; and three helicopter squadrons.[10]

On 3 June, President Nixon publicly announced the initial withdrawal of 50,000 men. MACV then informed III MAF that 19,800 Marines—as expected, a regimental landing team with aviation and support units—would be included in this increment. In response, III MAF submitted a proposed roster in mid-June of units for Keystone Robin Alpha. As already decided, the 7th Marines would depart in this redeployment, with the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, elements of the 4th Battalion, 11th Marines, and an assortment of support units and detachments. The aviation contingent would include Marine Composite Reconnaissance Squadron (VMCJ) 1, Marine (All-Weather) Attack Squadron (VMA[AW]) 242, Marine Fighter/Attack Squadrons (VMFAs) 122 and 314, and two medium helicopter squadrons, HMMs -161 and -262. III MAF also proposed to redeploy the Marines of three of the four combined action groups (CAGs), which were to be deactivated, leaving only one, the 2d CAG, operating in Quang Nam. In order to retain as many troops as possible for the summer campaign, the 7th Marines and the aircraft squadrons would delay their stand-down until well into September. The CAGs would cease operations, a few platoons at a time, between 1 August and 1 October.[11]

Hardly had III MAF developed this list of units when XXIV Corps, supported by MACV, demanded changes in it. As Lieutenant General Leo Dulacki, then

III MAF Chief of Staff, would later evaluate XXIV Corps reaction: "The continuing withdrawal of forces dictated that, in structuring the remaining forces, emphasis must be placed on fully integrated combat units. The Marine task-organized air-ground teams, whatever the size, provided a ready solution to this requirement."[12]

In particular, the XXIV Corps staff had realized the full impact of the loss of the Marine helicopter and attack squadrons. Lieutenant General Zais and his officers feared that the departure of these squadrons would leave the allies in I Corps dangerously short of tactical air support and transport helicopters. XXIV Corps also wanted to keep VMCJ-1 for its photographic reconnaissance capability and the 1st Radio Battalion, one of the support units scheduled for redeployment, which provided irreplaceable intelligence by intercepting enemy radio messages. At a Saigon meeting on 15 June, MACV and III MAF agreed to postpone the redeployment of most of the 1st Radio Battalion and of one squadron each of jet attack aircraft and medium helicopters. The MACV staff officers also argued for retention of VMCJ-1, but gave way on this issue when the III MAF representives pointed out that keeping this unit would overcrowd Da Nang Airbase and force continued operation of the base at Chu Lai which the Marines planned to close during Keystone Robin Alpha. To provide adequate control for the additional aircraft that would remain in-country, MACV at III MAF's request cancelled withdrawal orders for Marine Air Control Squadron (MACS) 4, another support unit supposed to leave in Keystone Robin Alpha. The changes decided upon would reduce the Marines' share of the coming redeployment by about 1,200 men who would be taken instead from Army, Navy, and Air Force elements, while the retained Marine units would probably leave after 15 October in the second Keystone Robin withdrawal.[13]

III MAF's revised trooplist, issued in late June, incorporated the changes agreed upon. Besides the 7th Marines and the artillery battalions already provided for, the list included the 1st 8-inch Howitzer Battery and 3d 175mm Gun Battery. The two remaining force engineer battalions with III MAF, the 7th and 9th, were scheduled to leave, as were more than 400 men of the 1st Marine Division's organic 1st Engineer Battalion. III MAF's reconnaissance strength would be reduced by redeployment or deactivation of the 1st and 3d Force Reconaissance Companies and by withdrawal of a large detachment from the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion. Most of the Marines of the 1st and 3d MP Battalions, which had defended the Da Nang Vital Area, would also redeploy. VMFA-314 and HMM-262 had been dropped from the aviation contingent, which still included VMFA-122, HMM-161, VMA(AW)-242, and over 2,300 personnel from headquarters and maintenance squadrons. Detachments from division and wing headquarters, from Force Logistic Command, from various transport and service units, and over 1,300 CAP Marines completed the roster of withdrawing troops.[14]

With the size and composition of Keystone Robin Alpha apparently set, planning began for execution of the complex movement of men and equipment. From 6-10 July, staff officers of FMFPac and III MAF attended a Keystone Robin Alpha movement planning conference at CinCPac Headquarters in Hawaii. There, with representatives of other Pacific-area commands, they began working out stand-down, embarkation, and movement schedules.[15]

At Da Nang during June and July, the III MAF, division, and wing staffs completed plans for repositioning their forces to fill in for the departing units. As the 7th Marines left its TAOR around LZ Baldy and in the Que Son Mountains, the 5th Marines (which was expected soon to follow the 7th Marines out of Vietnam) would evacute its combat base at An Hoa and probably also its positions covering the highway to Thuong Duc and shift its battalions to LZ Baldy and the Que Son Valley.[16] Colonel Floyd H. Waldrop, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, 1st Marine Division explained:

> We have made a point to strive to get rid of An Hoa prior to the [fall monsoon] rains, because . . . once the monsoons start and Liberty Bridge gets about nine feet under water, nothing moves to An Hoa* except by air until the rains subside, which could be several months. So we are trying to turn over An Hoa and get our forces – at least all of the non-helicopter-transportable forces – north of the river . . . prior to the monsoon.[17]

*Reducing a base like An Hoa was no small order. "Not only did the area in question have to be immaculate, all equipment left in place must be functioning properly," recalled Colonel Miller M. Blue, then Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4, 1st Marine Division. "Early liason between USMC/SVN forces was essential; joint inspections were required, in some cases by the Division Commander and Quang Da area commander." Blue explained further that "the requirement to reduce bases to their pre-war appearance caused the expenditure of vast amounts of diminishing engineer resources." Reducing or turning over a base at times required a weapons transfer, and the weapons had to be in perfect order. All of this "was a time-consuming process at an inconvenient time." An Hoa was, nevertheless, turned over within the targeted time schedule. Col Miller M. Blue, Comments on draft ms, 5Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File).

As the aviation units redeployed, almost five years of Marine air operations would come to an end at Chu Lai. There in 1965, on a lightly inhabited stretch of land along the South China Sea about 57 miles south of Da Nang, Marines had proved the workability of their experimental Short Airfield for Tactical Support (SATS). Since then, Chu Lai had ranked with Da Nang and Marble Mountain as a major Marine air facility. Now, with the number of Marine squadrons in I Corps being reduced, the III MAF staff decided to end operations at Chu Lai around 1 October. Da Nang and Marble Mountain could accommodate all the remaining aircraft of the 1st MAW, and the closing of Chu Lai would reduce the demands upon the aircraft wing's diminishing force of ground security, maintenance, and supply personnel.[18]

Plans for the 3d MAB

As the selection of troops for Keystone Robin Alpha and the planning for relocation of the units to remain in-country went forward, the Marine staffs also began preparations for replacing III MAF with a MAB. By mid-July, Colonel Noble L. Beck, just finishing a tour of duty as Chief of Staff, 1st Marine Division, could report that "There's a lot of thrashing around [at Da Nang] currently to get a MAB established and to get a MAB headquarters going and to get the MAB shaken down so they can assume control . . . ."[19]

Planning for the MAB had begun late in 1969 as the troop lists for Keystone Bluejay were being completed. By that time, two related sets of facts had become apparent to the Marine Corps. First, given MACV's commitment to a Marine-heavy withdrawal, most elements of the 1st Marine Division and 1st MAW would probably leave Vietnam during 1970 in redeployment Increment Four. Second, under the plans of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, all the Services were to keep units in Vietnam as long as the American combat role continued.

While most Marines would redeploy during 1970, not all would, and the composition of the force to remain had to be determined early to assure the retention in-country of the units required for it. Marine Corps leaders from the Commandant on down wanted the last Marine force in Vietnam, whatever its size, to be an air-ground team. As Lieutenant General William J. Van Ryzin, Chief of Staff, HQMC, later recalled, the Marine Corps' main concern "was in keeping that balanced force in there and keeping the Marine command entity out there, regardless of the level of forces, starting from III MAF down . . . . We didn't want to get into [a] World War I type of organization where we just became another brigade of an Army Division . . . ."[20]

Marine Corps doctrine prescribed standard organizations for air-ground task forces from the division-wing size MAF through the battalion-squadron size Marine amphibious unit (MAU). Among these, the Marine amphibious brigade seemed ideally suited to the probable numbers and mission of the residual Marine combat force in Vietnam. According to the official Marine Corps definition:

> The MAB, normally commanded by a brigadier general, is capable of conducting air-ground amphibious assault operations in low- and mid-conflict environments. The ground element of the MAB is normally equivalent to a regimental combat team (RCT). The air element is usually a MAG with varied aviation capabilities. The combat service support element includes significant resources from force troops, including the FSR (Force Service Regiment), division and wing combat service support units, and the Navy support units.[21]

In mid-December 1969, the Commandant of the Marine Corps ordered the headquarters of FMFPac and III MAF to begin planning for the organization of a MAB in Vietnam of about 10,800 men built around a regimental landing team and two aircraft groups—one fixed-wing and one helicopters. In addition to the MAB, FMFPac and III MAF were to plan on retaining after Increment Four between 600 and 1,200 CAP Marines and a logistic "rollup" force of about 1,200 support and service troops who would finish packing and shipping the equipment of the units leaving in Increment Four.

FMFPac then drafted a more detailed plan of organization for the MAB, proposing a ground element consisting of an infantry regiment, an artillery battalion, a platoon of 8-inch howitzers, and a battery of 175mm guns supported by reinforced companies of reconnaissance Marines, engineers, and tanks. For the aviation component FMFPac suggested a single composite aircraft group of two fixed-wing squadrons, a light helicopter squadron, and a medium helicopter squadron. FMFPac sent this plan to III MAF for its comments and for the designation of specific units for the brigade.[22]

On 6 January 1970, Lieutenant General Nickerson, still Commanding General, III MAF, sent FMFPac his proposals for a 10,800-man MAB. III MAF based its plan on the assumption that the brigade would oper-

tions of the III MAF staff, under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas P. Ganey of the G-3 section, drafted a proposed table of organization for the brigade headquarters. The committee's plan called for an "austere" staff of 88 officers and 171 enlisted men supported by a small headquarters company. To keep the entire establishment under a previously set limit of 380 officers and men in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, the drafting committee proposed that a number of key brigade staff jobs, such as that of engineer officer, be taken over by commanders of the brigade's component units.[28]

On 26 March, the committee sent its plan to the various staff sections for review and comment. The staff sections responded with an almost unanimous demand for more headquarters manpower and with protests against imposing brigade administrative duties on unit commanders. Such a doubling of functions, many of the sections pointed out, might be possible in a MAB engaged only in normal combat missions, but the brigade in Vietnam would have much larger responsibilities. As the senior Marine command in-country, it would have to maintain relations with MACV, XXIV Corps, the ARVN, and the other U.S. Services, and this would involve much complicated staff work. Colonel Wilbur F. Simlik, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4, III MAF, objecting to the plan to make the commander of the engineer battalion the brigade engineer officer, summed up the probable results of such "double-hatting" in the MAB:

> To depend on the harried commander of a bobtailed far flung Engineer Battalion to: (a) be available when required; (b) have the time to spare from his command to sit in on endless conferences and briefings, compose immediate, detailed action briefs, to attend conferences at XXIV Corps, Okinawa, [and] Hawaii away from his command, and (c) demand from his separated staff the necessary research for meaningful recommendations, is . . . courting failure.[29]

The committee revised the table of organization, submitted it for additional staff comment, and by the end of April had created a version which incorporated many of the staff sections' demands for more men and eliminated most of the extra duty for unit commanders. By reducing the strength of the headquarters company, the committee increased the number of headquarters staff personnel to 321 while keeping the combined total within the 380 ceiling. Lieutenant General Leo Dulacki, who was then Chief of Staff of III MAF, later remembered the frustration of tailoring the MAB headquarters, "incongruously, the proposed MAB Headquarters actually would contain more officers and men than did the much reduced III MAF Headquarters."[30]

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war seemed close at hand. III MAF was expected to redeploy two-thirds of its strength by the end of the year. Plans were well advanced for reorganization of the remainder into a smaller air-ground task force. The Marines still had time, however, for a final offensive, and by mid-July that attack was getting under way.

PART II
SUMMER AND FALL-WINTER CAMPAIGNS, 1970

CHAPTER 4

The Summer Campaign in Quang Nam, July-September 1970

New Campaign Plans—Summer Offensive: The 7th Marines in Pickens Forest
The 1st and 5th Marines Continue the Small-Unit War—Combat Declines, But the Threat Continues
Deployment Plans Change: More Marines Stay Longer

New Campaign Plans

On 10 June, MACV issued orders for an aggressive summer campaign to exploit the Communist reverses caused by the allied invasion of Cambodia. The orders directed allied regular forces to attack enemy bases and main force units. The Americans and other non-Vietnamese contingents would operate only within South Vietnam while the Vietnamese, besides taking part in the in-country offensive, would also continue limited operations in Cambodia. RFs and PFs were to speed up their takeover of local defense responsibilities to free more regulars for mobile warfare in the back country. The MACV directive enjoined continued concern for pacification and population security, but for the U.S. and ARVN units, at least, the emphasis for the summer was to be on wide-ranging attacks to drive the enemy still further from the populated regions.[1]

The announcement of the summer campaign was followed by a reorganization of the South Vietnamese Armed Forces (RVNAF) command structure. On 2 July, President Nguyen Van Thieu issued decrees incorporating the RFs and PFs into the Vietnamese Army and redesignating Corps Tactical Zones as Military Regions (MRs).* Under the new arrangement, I Corps, for example, became Military Region 1 (MR 1). Each corps commander now received two deputies—a corps deputy commander and a military region deputy commander. The corps deputy commander would conduct major offensive operations and furnish artillery, air, and other support to the MR, while the MR deputy commander, in charge of territorial defense and pacification, would command the RFs and PFs and supervise their training and administration. Concurrent with these decrees, MACV and the Vietnamese Joint General Staff (JGS) completed plans for incorporating the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups into the ARVN as Border Defense Ranger Battalions. As the summer campaign opened, many American and Vietnamese officers expressed uncertainty about how much change in day-to-day activities and working relationships these decrees would actually bring about. The overall purpose seemed clear: to unify command and strengthen the administration of the RVNAF.[2]

In I Corps, or MR 1 as it was now called, the fruition of III MAF's effort to build up Quang Da Special Zone (QDSZ) into an effective tactical headquarters coincided in time with the larger RVNAF reorganization. During the spring, the able commander of QDSZ, Colonel Nguyen Van Thien, moved his command post from downtown Da Nang to Hill 34, about five miles south of the city, a more suitable site from which to direct field operations. In the same period, QDSZ's combat operations and fire support direction centers finally reached the stage of development where they could support multibattalion operations.

General Lam, the commander of MR 1, turned over tactical direction of the ARVN summer campaign in Quang Nam to QDSZ. By early July, besides the 51st Regiment, QDSZ had received from General Lam operational control of the 1st Ranger Group, the CIDG 5th Mobile Strike Group, the 1st Armored Brigade, the 17th Armored Cavalry Squadron, and the 44th and 64th Artillery Battalions. On 11 July, when the 258th Vietnamese Marine Brigade—three infantry and one light artillery battalions—arrived to reinforce I Corps for the summer campaign,* General Lam placed it under control of QDSZ.[3] When the Vietnamese Marines reached Quang Nam, a III MAF staff officer recalled that QDSZ:

> . . . [was] given the full responsibility for receiving [them] from Saigon and getting them staged . . . and they took hold of this job in comparable fashion to how a Marine division headquarters would respond. They moved them in, got them bivouaced, got them squared away . . . .[4]

*These decrees, and another issued on 7 July, also reorganized the JGS in Saigon by, among other changes, abolishing the posts of the separate RF/PF commander and Special Forces Command and placing the inspector general of the RF/PF under the Inspector General Directorate of the JGS. *MACV Comd Hist 70*, II, chap. VII, pp. 16-20.

*Discussion of bringing in a Vietnamese Marine Brigade to strengthen I Corps had gone on since the beginning of the year, but its arrival was delayed until July. Col Floyd H. Waldrop, Debriefing at FMFPac, 19 Aug 70, Tape 4926 OralHistColl, MCHC, Washington, D.C.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373406

LtGen James W. Sutherland, USA, center, Commanding General, XXIV Corps, looks out from FSB Ryder with Col Edmund G. Derning, Jr., left, Commanding Officer, 7th Marines, and MajGen Charles F. Widdecke, Commanding General, 1st Marine Division.

This Quang Da Special Zone troop reinforcement was part of the preparations for the XXIV Corps/MR 1 joint summer campaign. Lieutenant General James W. Sutherland, USA, who in June had succeeded General Zais as XXIV Corps commander, had worked out an ambitious plan with General Lam to implement MACV's call for a summer offensive. In Thua Thien, the 101st Airborne and 1st ARVN Divisions would strike toward the Da Krong and A Shau Valleys, base areas from which the NVA threatened Hue. (The establishment of FSB Ripcord in March and April had been a preliminary to this operation). In Quang Tin, elements of the Americal and 2d ARVN divisions would reopen an abandoned airstrip at Kham Duc, deep in the mountains, and from there fan out, hunting enemy troops, supply caches, and lines of communication. In Quang Nam, QDSZ, controlling a division-size force for the first time and supported by two battalions of the 7th Marines, would attack Base Areas 112 and 127 west and southwest of Da Nang.[5]

Summer Offensive: the 7th Marines in Pickens Forest

In early July, as preparations began for the summer offensive, the 7th Marines had two of its battalions deployed in what its commander, Colonel Edmund G. Derning, called "pacification mode," the 1st Battalion covering the eastern part of the regiment's TAOR around LZ Baldy and the 3d Battalion guarding the Que Son Valley. The 2d Battalion also operated from LZ Baldy. It functioned as the regiment's "Swing Battalion," or mobile reserve, providing companies to reinforce the Rocket Belt during threatened enemy offensive "high points" and conducting multi-company operations where intelligence found profitable targets, usually in the Que Son Mountains or their foothills.

By early July, the 7th Marines faced what seemed to be a diminishing enemy threat. Colonel Derning's Marines now rarely encountered enemy soldiers in groups of more than 10, and the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong usually avoided sustained combat, relying on sniper fire and boobytraps to inflict Marine casualties. Derning, who had commanded the regiment since February, had gradually altered tactics in response to this decline in combat intensity. A graduate of the Atmy Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg,

North Carolina, he was well versed in counterguerrilla tactics and regarded pacification as his main mission. His training with the 1st Marine Raider Battalion in World War II provided him with an excellent understanding of night combat. Derning's new plan drew heavily on both of these elements of his experience.

Fundamental to Derning's "pacification mode," was the substantial abandonment of daytime patrols, sweeps, and searches by the 7th Marines' battalions around Baldy and in the Que Son Valley. Daytime maneuvers at the level of combat then prevailing, Derning believed, physically exhausted the troops without achieving significant results. Extensive daytime patrolling also increased the risk of boobytrap casualties with little probability of seriously hurting the enemy in the lowlands since the VC/NVA usually did not move much in the daylight. Instead of maneuvering, Derning's battalions by day surrounded known Viet Cong-controlled hamlets. Manning checkpoints, the Marines supervised the movement of the people between their houses and the fields, to prevent supplies from going out of the hamlets and VC from infiltrating.* The cordons, which consisted of static observation posts and firing positions, could be maintained with relatively few Marines. The rest could sleep, repair equipment, or train while company and platoon commanders planned extensive night ambushes and patrols to intercept small enemy units during the VC's preferred time for movement. Derning was convinced that these tactics both weakened the enemy by denying them supplies and mobility and reduced allied losses.[6]

While two of the battalions followed Derning's scheme of operations, the "Swing Battalion" continued daytime search and destroy maneuvers, usually in the Que Son Mountains. These operations at times proved productive. On 13 July, for instance, Company H of the 2d Battalion pursued a wounded Viet Cong into a cave in the Que Son foothills west of Baldy and discovered that it had trapped almost 30 VC.

A night-long siege ensued during which seven of the Viet Cong were killed, some of them by Marines who crawled into the cave and shot them at close range with pistols. A total of 20 VC, most of them the Communist leaders of a village, eventually surrendered. Colonel Derning considered this mass surrender and other defections by guerrillas an indication that his pacification strategy was succeeding.[7]

*For more detail on the pacification aspect of this strategy, see Chapter 9.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373325

Marines from the 2d Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines ford the Thu Bon River. Note many of the Marines are wearing soft floppy hats.

In mid-July, Colonel Derning and his staff put aside pacification plans and, instead, took up preparations for Operation Pickens Forest.* This, the 1st Marine Division's first operation of the year outside its regular TAOR, would form part of the general allied summer incursion into Base Areas (BAs) 112 and 127, the enemy's two principal mountain refuges in Quang Nam.

Each of these areas was a quadrangle of mountain and jungle which served as a collection point for supplies brought from Laos or the Quang Nam lowlands. Each contained cleverly hidden and fortified headquarters, communications centers, and training and rest camps. Here enemy main force units normally spent most of their time between operations. Command groups, including, it was believed, the *Front 4*

*In July the division staff resumed the practice of assigning names to operations of battalion or larger size.

Headquarters, directed enemy military and political activity from both bases. BA 127 extended north from Thuong Duc and eastward into Charlie Ridge. BA 112, larger in area and considered by allied staffs to be the more important of the two, was bounded on the north by the Vu Gia River. It stretched eastward to the western fringes of the Arizona Territory, southward into Quang Ngai Province, and westward to the Song Cai, a river which runs northeastward to enter the Vu Gia five miles west of Thuong Duc.

Allied reconnaissance teams had conducted almost 250 separate patrols in these two base areas since January, killing about 300 enemy and confirming the presence of many more. Hundreds of air attacks, including 22 Arc Light B-52 strikes, had showered bombs and napalm on suspected campsites and supply depots, and artillery had pounded still other targets. Now ground forces were scheduled to go in and stay long enough and in sufficient strength to deny the enemy use of these areas for the summer, find hidden supplies, and clear out any surviving enemy formations.[8]

Marines of Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines are seen on the march in the Thu Bon River Valley in Operation Pickens Forest southwest of Da Nang.
Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373921

Under the plan worked out by Quang Da Special Zone and the 1st Marine Division, South Vietnamese forces would penetrate deep into the western reaches of the base areas while the Marines swept an area closer to the populated regions. In July, continuing activities begun in May to relieve Thuong Duc, the 51st ARVN Regiment launched Operation Hung Quang 1/32B in southern BA 127. Southwest of Thuong Duc, in northwestern BA 112, the 1st Ranger Group continued Operation Vu Ninh 12, which it had started on 16 June. This operation expanded on 13 July when the 256th Vietnamese Marine Brigade began searching an area of operation south of that of the Rangers. By mid-July, Quang Da Special Zone, which had established its forward command post at An Hoa, had 11 battalions under its control scouring the base areas – three of the Vietnamese Marine battalions, two of the 51st Regiment, three of the 1st Ranger Group, and three of the Civilian Irregular Defense Group Mobile Strike Force.[9]

The block of terrain selected for Operation Pickens Forest was southwest of the Vietnamese Marines' area of operations. Encompassing the southeastern portion of BA 112, the area straddled the Thu Bon River. Its center lay about nine miles southwest of An Hoa where a small stream flowing northeastward out of the mountains of BA 112 empties into the Thu Bon. Here several major infiltration routes to and from Base Area 112 came together. To the west, a complex of stream beds and trails led into the mountains. To the south, enemy units could follow the Thu Bon into the Americal Division's TAOR while northward the same river offered access to the Arizona Territory, the An Hoa Region and, where the Thu Bon branched eastward into Antenna Valley, to the Que Son Mountains. Aerial and ground reconnaissance had observed continual enemy use of the area, which was known to be pocked with bunkers, caves, fighting holes, and probably large supply caches. In late 1969 and early 1970, the 1st Marine Division had made tentative plans for a drive into the region by the 5th Marines, but the operation had never been launched. Now, in Pickens Forest, the 7th Marines would take up the task.[10]

In the western part of their operating area, the Marines would encounter typical Vietnamese mountain terrain – a tangle of ridges cut up by steep-sided gullies and stream beds, and overgrown with dense jungle, underbrush, and in many places bamboo. Near

the Thu Bon, they would find a few hamlets where Viet Cong-controlled farmers grew tice and corn for the enemy. Surrounding the hamlets, level paddy and farm land was interspersed with treelines, palm and rubbertree groves, and stretches of elephant grass. Immediately east of the Thu Bon, the ground is hilly, but less densely forested than the terrain west of the rivet. Near the southern boundary of the area of operations, jungled hills close in on the Thu Bon, confining it to a series of narrow, steep-sided gorges.

According to allied intelligence estimates, this terrain probably concealed about 400 enemy troops. These included elements of *Front 4 Headquarters* and headquarters and supply units of the *38th NVA* and *1st VC Regiments* and the *490th Sapper Battalion*. Should they choose to counterattack the Marines, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong could bring into the area perhaps 1,500 combat troops of the *1st* and *38th Regiments*, but allied officers considered this a most unlikely course of action for the enemy, who probably would evade the Marines while harassing them with sniper fire and boobytraps. In fact, all the estimates of enemy strength and capabilities were only tentative. As Colonel Derning put it, "The real problem was what was the enemy, where was he, or was he really there at all?"[11]

Pickens Forest would be what the 1st Marine Division defined as a Category III operation, "designed to locate and destroy NVA forces, supplies and installations in the highlands before they can interfere with pacification . . . . Maintenance of a personnel presence in these areas is not envisioned." Because the enemy's strength and disposition were uncertain, the operation plan emphasized deployment of a substantial Marine force at the start, able to envelop any hostile units encountered and positioned to bring all of its men and firepower quickly into action in the event of a major engagement.

The scheme of maneuver centered atound a triangle of hilltop fire support bases (FSBs): Defiant, just west of the Thu Bon at what Colonel Derning labelled "the hub of the whole AO"; Mace, about three and one-half miles northwest of Defiant; and Datt, five miles southwest of Defiant. The latter two FSBs had been used in earlier Army and Marine operations, so they could be reopened quickly. In the first phase of the operation, one rifle company would land from helicopters to secure FSB Defiant, followed closely by a battery of 105mm howitzers. Two more rifle companies would then land along the banks of the Thu Bon to search that area and to provide a blocking force for units driving toward them from Mace and Dart. In the second phase, Mace and Dart would each be occupied by a battalion command post with two rifle companies and a 4.2-inch mortar battery. The rifle companies from each of the western firebases would work their way towatd FSB Defiant, along the hill trails and stteam beds, carefully searching the ground and, it was hoped, driving groups of enemy before them into the blocking force on the Thu Bon. As the companies reached the river valley, the reunited force would begin the third phase, a thorough search on both sides of the rivet.

The 7th Marines committed two of its battalions to the operation, the 1st under Lieutenant Colonel Charles G. Cooper and the 2d under Lieutenant Colonel Vincent A. Albers, Jr. Cooper's battalion, conttolling three of its own rifle companies* and one from Albers' battalion, would establish the blocking force east of the Thu Bon and FSB Mace. Albets' battalion with two companies would secure FSB Dart. A Pacifier company from the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, temporarily under conttol of the 7th Marines, would protect the main artillery position at FSB Defiant. The artillety contingent would consist of Battery G (six 105mm howitzers) and Battery W (six 4.2-inch mortars) from Lieutenant Colonel David K. Dickey's 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, reinforced by two 4.2 mortars and their crews from Battery W, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines. While these forces conducted the operation, the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth L. Robinson, Jr., would protect the tegiment's TAOR with its four rifle companies, the regimental CUPP company, and one company from Albers' battalion, aided by the RFs and PFs.[12]

Early in the morning of 16 July, D-Day for Pickens Forest, CH-46s and CH-53s of MAG-16 loaded with Marines, artillery, and supplies descended on their initial objectives. At about 0800, the Pacifier unit, Company C, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, took position on FSB Defiant. Thirty minutes later, the first three howitzers of Battery G were landed, followed shortly by the rest of the battery and Colonel Derning's regimental command post. About at the same time, Company B of the 1st Battalion dropped into LZ Bluejay just north of Defiant on the west bank of the Thu Bon, and Company E, 2d Battalion, deployed at LZ

*Company A, of the 1st Battalion was serving as the 7th Marines' Combined Unit Pacification Program (CUPP) company. See Chapter 9.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373328

Three Marines of Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines search the high grass in the Thu Bon River Valley southwest of Da Nang for the enemy during Operation Pickens Forest. Starting in early July 1970, Pickens Forest was the first named operation of the year.

Starling, about two miles south of Defiant on the east side of the river.

About 0930, the 1st Battalion command group with Companies C and D and four mortars of Battery W began landing at FSB Mace, while the 2d Battalion CP and four more mortars of Battery W occupied Dart, and Companies F and G landed just to the south in LZ Robin to achieve surprise. The Marines had not prepared Mace and Dart with air strikes or artillery fire. Instead, patrols from the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, airlifted into the vicinity the previous day, determined that the landing zones were safe, and on D-Day, guided in the troop-carrying helicopters.[13] By 1500 on the 16th, the entire attack force, brought in by helicopters, had moved into its planned positions. Colonel Derning, who spent much of the day aloft with the airborne helicopter commander, called the initial insertion "a beautiful example of air-ground team work . . . I've never seen school solutions work quite that well."[14]

As the Marines had expected, the enemy offered no opposition to their landings. The rifle companies quickly began searching the areas into which they had been inserted. The artillery used air-transported miniature bulldozers ("mini-dozers") to clear undergrowth from the fire support bases and to scoop out gun emplacements and ammunition storage pits. Each of the three fire bases had its own fire direction center, and Lieutenant Colonel Dickey set up a small artillery battalion CP and communications center at FSB Defiant to coordinate the batteries' efforts.[15]

For the next ten days, the operation went forward as planned. Company E gradually worked its way southward up the Thu Bon while Company B and the Pacifier company searched the river valley north of FSB Defiant. The units from FSBs Mace and Dart, meanwhile, pushed across country toward the river. In the extremely rough and overgrown mountains, Cooper's and Albers' Marines followed the major trails and streambeds on the assumption that this was where the enemy should be. The assumption proved correct, but the channelling of the Marines' approach into predictable routes often allowed Communist troops to escape before the Marines advanced into their base camps.

The enemy in the area avoided sustained combat, but small parties occasionally harassed the Marines with sniper fire and grenades, usually to cover the evacuation of base camps or the escape of a larger group. Until late in the operation, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong, presumably for lack of time, set few boobytraps. By attacking aggressively when the enemy showed themselves, the Marines killed a few NVA and VC, and they often forced the Communists to leave food and equipment behind when they fled. In the southern part of the operational area, night am-

bushes on the trails produced several significant contacts with the enemy. During the most important of these skirmishes on the night of 26 July, elements of Company E ambushed about 30 NVA in an exchange of gunfire and grenades that wounded six Marines. Searching the area of the fight the next morning, the Marines found 5 dead North Vietnamese soldiers, 3 weapons, and 24 packs, evidently abandoned by the retreating enemy survivors. Documents taken from the packs identified the ambushed men as members of a naval sapper group which had started south from Hanoi in February.[16]

Spreading out in squad and platoon patrols, the companies uncovered bunkers, camps, and caches of food, ordnance, and medical supplies. Many of these discoveries resulted from the careful search of target areas identified by intelligence sources. On 27 July, for example, a patrol from Company E, working with Vietnamese province officials and RF troops and guided by a Viet Cong defector, located a cache of 139 SKS rifles in the hills east of the Thu Bon. Colonel Derning later commented that "Most of . . . our scoring was done with intelligence. Intelligence targets are the key."[17]

As the companies that landed at Mace and Dart moved toward the Thu Bon, the artillery shifted position to support them. On 22 July, the mortar battery from Mace and the 1st Battalion CP were lifted by helicopters to a new position near the Thu Bon about two miles north-northeast of Fire Support Base Defiant. The next day, the other mortar battery moved from FSB Dart to Defiant, completing the concentration of the artillery to cover the Thu Bon Valley.

While most of the Pickens Forest area of operation contained few civilians, FSB Defiant overlooked several hamlets and a rice and corn growing area. Colonel Derning, in the first couple of days of the operation, had over 200 inhabitants of the hamlets collected and temporarily resettled in friendly villages to the north. He did this to screen the civilians for enemy soldiers and agents and to clear the area for Marine fire and maneuver. On the second day of the operation, Derning's Marines used helicopter-borne loudspeakers to order all civilians to move towards the Thu Bon, warning them that anyone moving away from the river would be considered hostile and fired upon by supporting gunships. The technique proved effective, but failure to use it immediately after insertion of the troops, in Colonel Derning's opinion, probably allowed most of the enemy hidden among the people to slip away into the hills. "I wish," Derning said later, "I had been able to use that technique to begin with, and I think I would have scored better."[18]

In the fields near FSB Defiant, acres of corn were ripe for harvesting. To deny this food to the enemy, Colonel Derning persuaded 1st Marine Division Headquarters to give him 50,000 piastres with which to hire friendly Vietnamese civilians to pick the corn. He offered the corn to the local Duc Duc District Chief, who did not think his people could use it. Derning then turned to the authorities in Que Son District, back in the 7th Marines' regular TAOR, who responded favorably.

Beginning on 24 July, CH-53s roared into LZ Baldy each morning to pick up loads of eager peasants, many of whom had assembled at the base gate at daybreak so as not to miss the trip. Loaded with people and with two and one-half-ton trailers slung underneath them, the big helicopters then flew to selected corn fields, set down the trailers, and disgorged the pickers who fanned out and went to work. By 1100 or 1130 each day, the trailers would be full, and the helicopters would fly them and the people back to Baldy. The 50,000 piasters ran out quickly, but, according to Derning, "it was just like taking a very small cup of water and priming the well." The peasants continued working for the corn itself, turning part in to their district authorities and keeping the rest to feed themselves and their animals. By 8 August, when the harvest ended, the Vietnamese had taken over 42,000 pounds of the enemy's corn, much of which could be seen laid out to dry on the paving of Route 1 "from Ba Ren River . . . to . . . just outside of Baldy."

Colonel Derning was "delighted" with the harvest he had set in motion. "I thought that every day we pulled that out we were really dealing old Charlie a good blow . . . and it was a good morale factor. It was good to be a member of the GVN."[19]

During the corn harvest, the 7th Marines began realigning and reducing its forces in Pickens Forest. All the infantry companies were now operating in the hills near the Thu Bon.

On 26 July, the 1st Battalion command group and Company B returned to LZ Baldy. The next day Company C followed them, leaving Company D to continue operations attached to Lieutenant Colonel Albers' 2d Battalion. Albers' battalion had resumed control of Company E on the 22d, and on the 27th, Company H, which had been under operational control of the 3d Battalion, arrived in the Thu Bon Val-

ley and began combing the hills north of FSB Defiant. On 28 July, the Pacifier company boarded helicopters to return to Division Ridge and control of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines. That same day, the 7th Marines command group moved back to LZ Baldy, and a regimental order assigned the 1st Battalion to defense of the eastern AO around Baldy and the 3d to protection of the Ross-Ryder area. The 2d Battalion, its CP now located on Hill 110 about three-quarters of a mile northeast of Defiant, would continue Pickens Forest.

The artillery also reduced and realigned forces. On 25 July, the mortar battery located north of FSB Defiant was broken up. Two of its weapons and their crews went from the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, to Baldy, and two more from the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines returned to their parent unit near Da Nang. Two days later four howitzers of Battery G and the artillery battalion command group moved to LZ Ross. The other two howitzers and their crews displaced to Hill 110. There they joined the four remaining mortars and crews of Battery W to form a provisional battery which continued to support Operation Pickens Forest.[20]

The Marines of the 2d Battalion continued searching along the Thu Bon. On 30 July, Company E, working its way upstream (southwesterly) along both banks of the river, ran into the strongest enemy opposition yet encountered in the operation. The contact occurred about four miles south of Hill 110 at a point where the river flows through a narrow, steep-sided gorge about 2,000 feet deep. At about noon on the 30th, eight Marines from Company E in two boats were hunting for caves in the cliffs overhanging the water, while other patrols moved along the bank. Without warning, perhaps 50 NVA or VC with as many as four machine guns, well concealed in caves and bunkers in the sides of the gorge close to water level, opened fire. They quickly riddled and sank the two boats, killing two Marines and wounding three. The survivers, both wounded and unwounded, were left floundering in the stream. The Marines on land returned fire, covering the retreat of their swimming comrades whom the current carried northward toward safety. Three flights of jets came into support Company E. In spite of low clouds, rain showers, and the narrowness of the gorge, which made direction of the strikes difficult, the Marine pilots managed to drop enough napalm to silence the enemy weapons and allow the infantry to regroup while a CH-46 evacuated the wounded. The skirmish had cost the company two men killed and a total of four wounded; enemy losses, if any, could not be determined.[21]

That evening, Company C, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, returned to Pickens Forest. Helicopters landed the Pacifier company in a valley south and west of the site of Company E's fight in the hope of blocking withdrawal of the hostile force. Sweeping northward up a mountain the next day, Company C killed one VC sniper and detained six civilian suspects but found no sign of the enemy main body. Companies C and E continued to sweep the area on 1 August, without significant contact, and that evening the Pacifier company returned to Da Nang.[22]

For another week after the fight at the river, the Marines continued searching the Thu Bon Valley. They killed or captured a few more Viet Cong and uncovered three large food caches and several smaller ones of weapons and medical supplies. The number of troops in the operation steadily dwindled. On 1 August, Company F returned to LZ Baldy for rest and rehabilitation. Its place was taken by Company G which had just finished a similar rest period. On 5 August, Company E also left the Thu Bon Valley for Baldy.

On 9 August, companies of the 2d Battalion moved into a new area of operations farther west. This change of position resulted from a decision by General Lam late in July to send several Vietnamese battalions beyond the western border of BA 112 in a raid on suspected enemy logistic and communications centers. Lam, supported by Lieutenant General Sutherland, the XXIV Corps commander, asked III MAF to extend the 7th Marines' area of operation to support this advance. General McCutcheon argued against the movement. He pointed out that information about the advance probably would reach the enemy, eliminating any chance of major finds or contacts, and that the ARVN could achieve more by renewing and intensifying operations nearer the populated areas. Lam insisted on the westward thrust and Sutherland backed him, so McCutcheon finally agreed reluctantly to commit a Marine battalion to support the ARVN.[23]

Accordingly, on the 9th, Lieutenant Colonel Albers received orders to occupy FSB Hatchet about 20 miles northwest of Hill 110 while leaving one company in the Thu Bon Valley. That same day, Company E, fresh from its rehabilitation at Baldy, supported by two 105mm howitzers of Battery G from FSB Ross, took position at FSB Hatchet. The firebase, recently vacat-

ed by a Vietnamese Marine battery, crowned a high hill just east of the Cai River, which borders BA 112 on the west. The surrounding country is mountainous with the exception of some level ground and a few hamlets near the river. A major, but long unused highway, Route 14, which ran from Thuong Duc southward into the Central Highlands, passed by the east side of the firebase.

The enemy reacted to the Marines' arrival at Hatchet with a salvo of five 122mm rockets. The rockets inflicted casualties – one Marine wounded and one ARVN soldier killed and another wounded from a South Vietnamese unit still operating in the area. On 10 August, more Marine artillery arrived; helicopters lifted in two 105mm howitzers of Battery G and two 155mm howitzers of Battery W from FSB Ross.* On the 11th, the 2d Battalion command post established itself at FSB Hatchet, and within the next few days, Companies F and H of the battalion joined Company E in search and destroy operations in the hills around the base. The howitzers fired in support of the Marines and also of the ARVN units to the west.[24]

While Albers' Marines searched the hills along the Cai River, Operation Pickens Forest and the concurrent South Vietnamese operations moved into their concluding phases. On 16 August, Company G of Albers' battalion and the provisional battery from Hill 110 left the Thu Bon Valley for LZ Baldy, ending Marine activity in the original Pickens Forest area. At the same time, General Lam informed XXIV Corps and III MAF that on 23 August he would start withdrawing his South Vietnamese Marine and Ranger battalions from the western mountains to have them back near the coast before the onset of the fall monsoon rains made air support and supply difficult. To cover this ARVN pullback, III MAF would keep Albers' battalion at FSB Hatchet until 24 August.[25]

During its last few days around FSB Hatchet, the 2d Battalion made contact with North Vietnamese regulars. About 0915 on 20 August, the 3d Platoon of Company H was sweeping toward the northeast through open forest and elephant grass near the hamlet of My Hiep (2) which was two miles north of the firebase. An estimated platoon of NVA opened fire from bunkers with machine guns and grenade launchers, wounding three members of Company H. The Marines replied with small arms and grenades and called in artillery and air support. The fight continued through the morning. Other elements of Company H assisted the engaged platoon. Company F marched toward the action from its search area to the southeast, and Company G was brought in by helicopter from LZ Baldy. The action ended around 1300, when the Marines lost contact with the enemy. By that time, they had suffered one man killed and a total of nine wounded; the fleeing NVA left behind three dead.[26]

Before dawn the next day, Lieutenant Colonel Albers led Companies G and H in a sweep through the abandoned enemy position. His troops found 12 bunkers, 1 more dead NVA, and 5 boobytraps, one of which exploded and wounded three Marines. Continuing to search near My Hiep (2) on 22 August, Company G found a group of six more large bunkers a short distance east of the site of the engagement. Intelligence revealed that these had housed the headquarters of an element of the *38th NVA Regiment*.[27]

These events partially confirmed other indications that troops of the *38th Regiment* were forming in Lieutenant Colonel Albers' area of operations. Evidence gathered from many sources from 20-23 August suggested that the NVA were preparing to attack FSB Hatchet. On the 23rd, for example, Marines of Company E sighted four enemy, probably a reconnaissance element, about 1,200 meters from the perimeter of the firebase and fired a 106mm recoilless rifle at them. Albers later concluded that it was "probable that had the operation not ended on 24 August and evacuation of FSB Hatchet been executed the *38th NVA Regiment* would have launched an attack."*[28]

Albers' battalion did not wait to receive the attack. As previously planned, the CP and all four companies were airlifted back to the 7th Marines' TAOR on the 24th while the artillery displaced to rejoin their parent units at FSB Ross and LZ Baldy. With these movements, Operation Pickens Forest came to an end.

During the six weeks of the operation, the batteries supporting the 7th Marines fired 771 missions, most of them at targets designated by intelligence as probable base camps and avenues of enemy movement. For the 2d Battalion alone, aircraft of the 1st MAW flew 37 close air support missions with 500- and 1,000-pound bombs, 5-inch Zuni rockets, and 500-pound napalm cannisters. Besides making repeated trooplifts, helicopters of MAG-16 carried out 147

*The Mortar Battery (W) of the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines consisted of six 4.2-inch mortars and two 155mm howitzers.

*In Thua Thien to the north, the allies had evacuated FSB Ripcord late in July under heavy NVA pressure, and during August a second outlying firebase, O'Reilly, came under continual mortar attack.

medical evacuations and performed over 150 other missions.[29]

Throughout the operation, the 7th Marines relied entirely upon helicopters to resupply its wide-ranging battalions. All supplies for the units engaged in Pickens Forest went to the field from the regiment's logistic support area (LSA) at LZ Baldy. Here personnel of the regiment's logistic support unit (LSU)* maintained stockpiles of food, fuel, and ammunition which were brought in daily by truck convoys from Da Nang. Each battalion ar Baldy set up its own supply dump of clothing, individual equipment, and construction and fortification material. Daily requisitions from the maneuvering battalions went to regimental headquarters where the S-4 section of the staff consolidated them and transmitted them to the LSA while the air liaison officer arranged for helicopters from MAG-16. At the LSA, a work crew from each battalion, stationed at Baldy for this purpose, packed its unit's supplies, drawn either from its own stockpile or from the general reserve, and placed them at assigned points on the helicopter pad. The morning after the requisition was received, helicopters picked up the shipment and flew it out to the battalion. To prevent shortages in the field if bad weather interrupted this flow of supplies, the battalions maintained two days' reserve stocks at their fire support bases.

Under this system, helicopters of MAG-16 lifted over 3,500,000 pounds of cargo for the 7th Marines between 16 July and 24 August. As a result of their efforts, no major supply shortages or interruptions occurred during the operation.[30]

During Pickens Forest, the 7th Marines killed a total of 99 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong at a cost of four Marines dead and 51 wounded. Units of the regiment uncovered 5 major weapons and ordnance caches, 6 significant stockpiles of food, 12 base camps, a large hospital, 121 bunker complexes, and the enemy's *Quang Da Post Office*. Weapons and stores taken from the caches included 174 SKS and AK-47 rifles, over 72,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, almost 500 82mm mortar rounds, over 55,000 pounds of corn, and 215 pounds of medical equipment. In the *Quang Da Post Office*, the Marines found 50 letters from North Vietnam and a Communist manual of postal procedure.[31] Temporarily at least, the operation had blocked a major part of the enemy's trail network. Colonel Waldrop, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, 1st Marine Division, summed up: "It [Pickens Forest] has not been a fantastic success, but it has considerably hampered the enemy, not so much in the kills that were made, but in the fact that it blocked and cleaned out the caches in one of his choke points in his transportation system."[32]

Marine Corps Historical Collection

Col Paul X. "P.X." Kelley, facing the camera, accepts the colors of the 1st Marines from Col Edward A. Wilcox in a formal change of command ceremony.

Pickens Forest's South Vietnamese companion operations, Vu Ninh 12 and Hung Quang 1/32B, had produced comparably modest but still significant results. The Vietnamese infantry, rangers, and Marines claimed over 500 enemy casualties while losing 44 of their own killed and 227 wounded. They had captured some 290 weapons and had found a number of base camps and supply caches. Their most important discovery occurred on 10 August when the rangers west of BA 112 came upon 30 huts which allied intelligence later identified as a recently abandoned site of *Front 4 Headquarters*. The huts contained much communication equipment, including 21 telephones, over a mile of wire, and about 100 pounds of documents.[33]

The 1st and 5th Marines Continue the Small-Unit War

While the 7th Marines drove into the enemy's mountain bases during the summer, the 1st and 5th

*Logistic support units, ordinarily collocated with regimental command posts, consisted of supply and mainenance personnel from Force Logistic Command who worked hand in hand with representatives from 1st Division units. For further detail on their organization and operation, see Chapter 18.

Marines continued small-unit operations in defense of Da Nang. The TAORs of the two regiments and the deployment of their battalions remained as they had been since the rearrangements that followed the departure of the 26th Marines. The 1st Marines defended the Rocket Belt, and the 5th Marines protected An Hoa and the Vu Gia Rivet Valley while conducting periodic forays into the Arizona Territory.

The 1st Marines underwent a change of command on 29 June when Colonel Wilcox, in a ceremony at the regimental CP at Camp Perdue on Division Ridge, turned over the colors to Colonel Paul X. Kelley. Colonel Kelley would remain in command of this regiment, already designated as the principal ground element of the proposed MAB, until the end of operations at Da Nang in June 1971. A native of Massachusetts, Kelley wore Army jump wings and earned Marine jump wings while commanding 2d Force Reconnaissance Company. He had attended Commando school in England and jungle warfare courses in Malaysia as an exchange officer with the British Royal Marines. During his previous Vietnam tour in 1966, he had won the Silver Star Medal while commanding the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines. Aggressive and athletic, Colonel Kelley spent much of his time in the field with his troops. Nicknamed "PX," he had a reputation as a hard-driving commander, but one who inspired officers and men alike to achieve his high standards.

On 10 August, a rearrangement of command of the close-in defense of Da Nang occurred when the 1st Marine Division discontinued the Northern and Southern Sector Defense Commands. The 3d Battalion, 1st Marines extended its TAOR to the southeast to embrace part of the old NSDC, with its commander now responsible for coordinating the defense of the resident support and supply units. The 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, still the division reserve, continued to direct the defense of most of the former SSDC and enlarged its area of responsibility to include the division command post and the installations on Division Ridge. These changes in designation and command responsibility had little effect on the day and night routine of patrols and ambushes that protected the division's rear area.[34]

By the time these command rearrangements were made, another long-standing feature of the defenses of Da Nang had been almost completely dismantled. This was the Da Nang Barrier, or Da Nang Anti-infiltration System (DAIS), the line of mine fields, cleared land, barbed wire fences, and electronic sensors which Marine commanders had hoped would allow them to stop infiltration of the Rocket Belt with fewer troops. The system had never been put in full operation, and the 1st Marine Division lacked the engineers and equipment to finish its construction and the infantry to man it. The sensors which had been installed furnished little useful intelligence because activations caused by passing farmers and water buffaloes could not be distinguished from those caused by rocket-bearing NVA or VC. Maintenance of the sensors had proved, in the words of a division report, "nearly impossible, due to indigenous personnel cutting and removing sections on the cables." The barrier, by restricting civilian movement, retarded pacification, and the Marines now were emphasizing mobile tactics rather than barrier defense. Therefore, on 3 May, III MAF approved a 1st Marine Division request for permission to demolish the barrier. By 3 June, efforts to control population movement through it had ended. Removal of sensors began late in July and was completed by 15 August.[35]

Thus, by mid-summer, protection of the Rocket Belt depended primarily on Colonel Kelley's three infantry battalions. Their deployment did not change. The 3d Battalion, its TAOR enlarged, continued to defend the northern and northwestern quadrants of the arc drawn around Da Nang; the 1st Battalion protected the western and southwestern approaches; and the 2d Battalion guarded the southern sector. To block enemy infiltration of the Rocket Belt, each battalion conducted daily small-unit patrols and ambushes, varying these with larger operations. The Marines cooperated in cordon and search operations with Vietnamese territorials, or, in the case of the 2d Battalion, with Korean Marines. Occasionally, the 1st and 3d Battalions sent two or more of their companies on short reconnaissances in force into the hills on the edge of the populated area. The 2d Battalion, in its heavily boobytrapped TAOR, continued the practice adopted in June of covering its terrain in daytime from static observation posts and doing most of its patrolling, ambushing, and fighting at night when the Viet Cong often removed many of their mines to permit their own forces to maneuver.[36]

Throughout the regiment's TAOR, the enemy appeared to be concentrating on collecting supplies and maintaining contact with the underground in the villages. Small groups of VC and NVA, rarely numbering more than 10, continually tried to move in and

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373915
Marines of Company L, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines cross a fast-moving stream in the Elephant Valley, a jungled enemy base area 17 miles northwest of Da Nang.

out of the Rocket Belt. In brief exchanges of grenades and small arms fire, Marine patrols and ambushes frequently intercepted the infiltrators, and batteries of the 11th Marines continued to fire their nightly harassing and interdiction fire* at suspected rocket launching sites and infiltration routes. The effect of this sporadic skirmishing on the larger tactical situation was difficult to measure, as always, but at the end of September, as an indication of effectiveness, the 2d Battalion could report that for 100 consecutive days no rocket or mortar shell had been fired at Da Nang from within its TAOR.[37]

The enemy's reduced effectiveness in the 2d Battalion's area may have resulted from an unusually successful attack on a VC command post by elements of the battalion.[38] Late in July, a combined sweep south of Marble Mountain by units of the 2d Battalion and the Korean Marine Brigade captured a woman member of the Viet Cong's *District III Da Nang Headquarters*, the control authority for enemy activity in the area from Marble Mountain north to Tien Sha Peninsula. Under interrogation, the woman detailed the operations of the headquarters and pointed out the approximate location of the bunker complex which housed it. A Marine search then discovered the bunkers in flat paddy land near the hamlet of Quang Ha (1) about six miles south of Marble Mountain airfield. Finding the bunkers empty, the Marines left them intact in the hope the enemy would continue to use them. The enemy did so, but two attempted surprise night attacks on the bunker complex failed when the assaulting force encountered VC pickets and boobytraps.

In spite of the increasing attention their hideout was receiving from the Marines, the Viet Cong leaders continued to conduct regular work sessions in the bunkers. They evidently thought that lookouts among the farmers in the fields by day and rings of sentries and boobytraps at night would assure them time to evade any attacking force. Lieutenant Colonel William G. Leftwich, Jr., the 2d Battalion's commander, decided to try to exploit the enemy's overconfidence with a surprise daytime raid. Under the plan he and his staff worked out, helicopters would land an assault force directly on top of the bunkers with no prior preparation of the landing zone, thus avoiding the enemy's security ring and trapping them.

Lieutenant Colonel Leftwich organized an assault force under his personal command, consisting of a detachment of staff and communications personnel from battalion headquarters, the 3d Platoon of Company G, the battalion reconnaissance squad, and a group from the 3d Counterintelligence Team.* These units would conduct the helicopterborne asault while a second rifle platoon and a section of tanks from Company C, 1st Tank Battalion stood by on the ground to lend support if required.

At 1400 on 4 August, the assault force took off from Camp Lauer, the 2d Battalion's CP, in four CH-46s of HMM-364 and flew northward away from the target area to mislead enemy observers. At the same time, the command Huey from HML-167 and two Cobra gunships of HML-367 lifted off and flew toward the west. At 1430, after making a wide, circuitous approach, the entire force swooped down on the bunkers. No overflights by reconnaissance aircraft or preparatory bombing or shelling had forewarned the VC of the impending attack, and they were caught. The bat-

*Harassing fire: Fire designed to disturb the rest of enemy troops, to curtail movement, and, by threat of losses, to lower morale. Interdiction fire: Fire placed on an area or point to prevent the enemy from using it.

*Counterintelligence Teams (CITs) and Interrogation and Translation Teams (ITTs) consisted of Marines specially trained in interrogation of prisoners and translation of captured documents.

talion's after action report described the ensuing scramble.

> The VC were caught by surprise and attempted to flee. The first action upon landing was a melee in and around the bunkers as the Marines chased down the slower moving VC. Another more far ranging pursuit then developed as the C & C ship and Cobras chased the faster moving VC. By swooping low and firing guns into the nearby ground the helicopters forced the VC to stop until the foot Marines closed with their quarry. In some cases, CH-46's dropped in and quickly shifted rifle squads over to the next target. If VC shot at a chasing helicopter, door gunners or on board ordnance quickly dispatched them.[39]

By 1600, the fight had ended, and the Marines spread out to collect the enemy dead and wounded. There were no Marine casualties. The raiders had killed 12 Viet Cong, including the district chief, the military affairs officer, and the security officer of *District III Da Nang*. They had captured 9 others, 8 rifles, 14 grenades, and headquarters papers of considerable intelligence value.

That night, the Marines left an ambush in the bunker area, and the next day, after further search, engineers destroyed the bunkers. The Marines delivered the bodies of the dead VC leaders to the GVN's Dien Ban District Chief, who planned to display the corpses in the hamlets as gruesome but graphic evidence that the allies were winning the war.

In September, Lieutenant Colonel William M. Yeager's 3rd Battalion conducted Operation Dubois Square, the 1st Marines' only named operation of the summer. This operation was a reconnaisance in force to determine whether or not major enemy units were massing in the mountains northwest of Da Nang. On 9 September, three rifle companies, Company K of the 3d Battalion and Companies B and F of the 1st and 2d Battalions respectively, under operational control of Yeager's battalion, landed by helicopter in rugged hills on both sides of the Cu De River about 15 miles northwest of Da Nang. At the same time, a composite howitzer and mortar battery from the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines established FSB Sam on a hilltop just north of the Cu De east of where the infantry had landed. After six days of searching the steep jungle slopes and boulder-strewn ravines near the initial landing zones, Company K moved by helicopter about 10 miles to the northeast to investigate another suspected enemy base area. The Marines ended the operation on 19 September, having encountered no VC or NVA. They found a few small, abandoned camps and other indications of enemy activity, but no sign of the presence of any large Communist force.[40]

Southwest of the 1st Marines, the 5th Marines operated throughout the summer along Route 4 and in the broad basin where the Thu Bon and the Vu Gia River flow together. Like the 1st Marines, the 5th Marines underwent a change of commanders. On 27 June, Colonel Clark V. Judge took over the regiment from Colonel Estey. Colonel Judge, a Pennsylvanian, had entered the Marine Corps as a reservist and received his regular commission in 1953. A veteran of Korean combat, he was now beginning his first tour in Vietnam.

As had been the case since the Keystone Bluejay redeployments, Colonel Judge, as regimental commander, directly controlled only his 2d and 3d Battalions. The 1st Battalion, as division reserve, operated under control of 1st Marine Division Headquarters. Of the battalions under Judge's control, the 2d continued to defend Liberty Bridge and An Hoa while conducting mobile operations in the Arizona Territory and on eastern Go Noi Island. The 3d Battalion remained in position on Hills 52, 25, and 65 guarding the supply line to Thuong Duc.

LCpl Larry Hicks from Company G, 2d Battalion, 1st Marines guards an enemy suspect after a successful operation that netted several Viet Cong leaders.
Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373441

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373430

LCpl William R. Brown cautiously approaches an old boat tied up to a river bank. After several years of combat in Vietnam, 1st Division Marines had learned through bitter experience that the most innocent appearing objects often concealed dangerous boobytraps.

In July and August, the regiment removed most of its headquarters and support units from An Hoa, implementing the division's plans to evacuate Marines from that base. The 3d Battalion, which had maintained a rear command post at An Hoa to manage administrative and supply matters while its forward CP on Hill 65 directed combat operations, moved its rear CP to Hill 37 in July. The following month, the regimental headquarters, also located at An Hoa, divided into forward and rear elements. The forward command post, consisting of Colonel Judge with the intelligence and operations sections of the staff and detachments of the personnel and supply sections, relocated to Hill 37. The regimental rear, composed of the executive officer with the personnel, supply, and pacification sections of the staff, moved to Camp Reasoner* on Division Ridge. At the same time, the headquarters battery of the regiment's direct support artillery unit, the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, joined the 5th Marines forward CP on Hill 37, while a rear element of the artillery headquarters established itself at the 11th Marines' regimental CP. Several artillery batteries and support units also left An Hoa in August, displacing to Hill 65, LZ Baldy, and the Da Nang area. The 2d Battalion, 5th Marines continued to maintain its command post at An Hoa and would take charge of the base's defense until the ARVN assumed responsibility in the fall.[41]

The 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, besides protecting its TAOR around the division command post, conducted as many as four Pacifier operations each week during the summer. The division now used the infantry-helicopter combination primarily for quick reaction to sightings of large groups of enemy and to forestall expected enemy attacks. As the division operations officer explained it:

> We get indications, for instance, that the enemy is building up for an attack on Hill 55, and we have a pretty good idea of which unit it is that's going to do the attacking, and we . . . through his normal patterns know where his assembly areas and attack positions will be, or we have a pretty good idea, so what we'll do is put the Pacifier in there all the way up to a company size . . . and they will . . . maybe not get many kills, but we find it highly effective in preempting the enemy actions.[42]

Lieutenant Colonel Bernard E. Trainor, then battalion commander of 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, later explained that he modified use of Pacifier operations during this period to minimize the casualties taken from mines and boobytraps. "Nobody pursued. There was only pursuit by fire," he said. "Each of the units would have a different colored (cloth) patch (yellow, white, red) on the top of its helmets . . . I would usual-

*Camp Reasoner was named after 1st Lieutenant Frank S. Reasoner, Commanding Officer, Company A, 3d Reconnaissance Battalion, 3d Marine Division, who was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously for his actions on 12 July 1965 while leading a reconnaissance patrol near Da Nang.

ly land two units (platoons) and we'd keep one airborne. . . ." When contact was made, the VC would usually withdraw, often trying to draw Marines into heavily mined areas. Trainor's battalion would not follow on foot.

"The unit that made contact immediately pursued by fire and the unit that I had airborne we would put in to do the pursuit by air . . . . So the guys on the ground never had to do any humping which would put them into the minefields." The colored patches on helmets facilitated control from the air. "I'd be able to look down and see the color of the helmet and be able to talk . . . red, yellow, blue," said Trainor, "and that's the way we would command and control the thing. And it was quite effective." The new procedures were successful, resulting in numerous enemy killed and captured while totally avoiding friendly casualties by mines and boobytraps during Pacifier Operations.[43]

Pacifier companies often reinforced other Marine or South Vietnamese units to cordon and search villages. They also took part in sweeps of mountain base areas, such as Operation Pickens Forest. Their operations produced a modest but steady accumulation of enemy casualties. In August, for example, Pacifier activities accounted for 11 Viet Cong and North Vietnamese killed, took 15 prisoners, and captured four weapons.[44]

The regiment's 2d and 3d Battalions carried on the pattern of operations they had established earlier in the year. The 2d Battalion emphasized two- and three-company cordons and searches of enemy hamlets, varied with tank-infantry sweeps, mostly in the Arizona Territory. In the Thuong Duc corridor, the 3d Battalion and the Vietnamese territorial forces in July abandoned and razed their defense position on Hill 25 while continuing to garrison Hills 52 and 65 overlooking Route 4. In August and September, Marines of the 3d Battalion launched an increasing number of helicopter-borne forays into Charlie Ridge and the northern Arizona. The battalions encountered only small groups of enemy during the summer, either flushed from ditches, huts, and spider holes during sweeps of villages or colliding with patrols and ambushes as the enemy sought food or tried to infiltrate populated areas. In August, a typical month of this kind of action, the regiment killed 29 NVA and VC,

Marine tanks and infantry from the 5th Marines and Company C, 1st Tank Battalion move out through a corn field in Operation Barren Green in the My Hiep sector south of Da Nang during July 1970. This was the first named operation for the 5th Marines.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A 373933

took nine prisoners, and captured 14 weapons at a cost of six Marines killed in action, three dead of wounds, and 60 wounded. Boobytraps caused many of the Marine casualties. In August, the battalions reported finding 50 of these devices and accidentally detonating 26.[45]

The 5th Marines conducted two named operations during the summer. The first, Operation Barren Green, centered on the VC-controlled My Hiep area just south of the Song Vu Gia in northern Arizona Territory. Here large fields of corn had ripened which allied intelligence expected to be harvested by enemy sympathizers and then carried by infiltrators southwestward into the mountain base camps of the *38th NVA Regiment.* In an effort to keep the enemy from obtaining this corn, on 15-16 July, a reinforced platoon from the 3d Battalion, in cooperation with RFs from Dai Loc District, protected civilians brought in from north of the river to harvest the crop. In two days, the civilians collected 30 tons of corn, but on the second day enemy sniper fire and boobytraps killed three PFs, wounded eight RFs, five civilians, and 12 Marines, and so frightened the harvesters that the operation had to be discontinued with much corn still standing in the fields.

In Operation Barren Green, from 24 to 27 July, companies from the 2d and 3d Battalions, supported by a platoon from Company C, 1st Tank Battalion, returned to the My Hiep area. In the first phase of the operation, controlled by the 2d Battalion, a cordon and sweep routed out and captured a few enemy. A reconnaissance team nearby ambushed a party of NVA from the *38th Regiment* fleeing the area with a load of corn and killed seven of them. In the second phase of the operation, the 3d Battalion took charge and oversaw the destruction of the rest of the standing corn, much of which was crushed by the tanks. When the operation ended on 27 July, the Marines had killed 18 NVA and VC, captured three prisoners and four weapons, and destroyed about 10,000 pounds of the enemy's corn.[46]

The 5th Marines' second named operation, Lyon Valley, was also aimed at stopping the movement of food from the northern Arizona to the base areas of the *38th Regiment*, in this case by blocking trails and destroying camps and caches in the mountains bordering the Arizona area on the southwest. On 16 August, Companies F and H of the 2d Battalion with a battalion command group were inserted by helicopter into mountain landing zones. At the same time, Company L of the 3d Battalion, under operational control of the 2d Battalion, screened the northern face of the mountains. The 2d Battalion companies pushed northeastward from their landing zones along the trails toward the blocking company while searching for enemy troops and installations. In two small firefights, Marines of Company F killed three North Vietnamese, but the companies encountered no large enemy units. The trails the Marines followed showed signs of frequent use, and the companies found numerous bunkers, holes, and rocket launching sites. They also came upon several antiaircraft gun positions and in one they captured a 12.7mm machine gun. On 22 August, Companies F and H reached the northern foot of the mountains, where they boarded helicopters and flew back to An Hoa. Company L on the same day returned to the control of the 3d Battalion.

On 23 August, Companies F and H resumed the operation. With minimal air or artillery preparation of their landing zones, they landed by helicopter in the southwestern Arizona in an effort to surprise and trap enemy combat and transportation troops who might have hidden there while the earlier maneuvers blocked movement into the hills. The Marines captured only one North Vietnamese soldier, but they found a large quantity of food. Operation Lyon Valley ended on 24 August; results were modest. The Marines suffered no combat casualties, although 11 men were incapacitated by heat stroke and accidents. They killed five enemy and captured one, uncovered and destroyed 13 base camps, and collected two weapons, assorted other ordnance, and over three tons of food.[47]

Combat Declines, But the Threat Continues

For the Marines—whether combing Base Area 112 in Operation Pickens Forest or patrolling and ambushing in the Rocket Belt, the Arizona Territory, the Thuong Duc corridor, and the Que Son Valley—it had been a summer of diminishing contact with the enemy. Throughout the summer, and in fact throughout the first eight months of 1970, *Front 4* had withheld most of its main force units from battle. By early September, there were indications that *Front 4's* main force strength actually had decreased. Documents captured in Operations Pickens Forest, Lyon Valley, and Dubois Square, supported by other information developed through continuous patrolling by infantry and reconnaissance units, pointed to a consolidation and reduction of *Front 4's* military command organization and to the disbanding or departure from the province of three of the four North Vietnamese infantry regiments reported there at the beginning of the year.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A 373546

A Marine from the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines searches a bomb crater in the "Arizona Territory," named after the Western badlands and an enemy stronghold.

Only the *38th Regiment*, which had probed ARVN defenses at Thuong Duc in May and threatened FSB Hatchet in August, still seemed to be active.[48]

Month by month, the amount of local force activity had also diminished. By late August, in Quang Nam, III MAF was conducting an average of 21 percent more small-unit and company-size operations per month than it had conducted in the province in 1969, but the average number of contacts per month had fallen to only 78 percent of that in the previous year.[49]

South of III MAF's TAOR, the results of the summer offensive reflected a similar decline in enemy activity and aggressiveness. The 196th Infantry Brigade of the Americal Division and elements of the 2d ARVN Division in Operation Elk Canyon had secured Kham Duc airfield in the mountains of western Quang Tin on 12 July.

From then until 26 August, they defended the airstrip against enemy fire attacks and light ground probes while carrying on search and destroy activities in the surrounding hills. By the 26th, when they evacuated Kham Duc and fell back toward the coast, the Army and ARVN troops had achieved only minor contact, killing 66 enemy and taking one prisoner at a cost to the Americans of five men killed in action.[50]

North of Quang Nam, on the other hand, where elements of the 101st Airborne and 1st ARVN Divisions advanced toward the enemy's vital A Shau Valley infiltration routes, the North Vietnamese reacted strongly. During July, they massed troops against the 101st Airborne's Fire Support Base Ripcord in the mountains west of Hue and pounded it with mortars, recoilless rifles, and rocket propelled grenades (RPGs). Artillery fire, air strikes, and ground sweeps failed to drive off the determined NVA, who appeared to be preparing for a full-scale attack. Rather than fight a bloody, politically embarrassing, and militarily unproductive battle in the highlands, the U.S. and ARVN high commands decided to evacuate the firebase. The evacuation was carried out under fire on 22-23 July, at a cost to the Americans of eight helicopters damaged and one shot down and several artillery pieces abandoned. Combat around Ripcord between 13 March and 23 July had resulted in American losses of 112 killed and 698 wounded, but the 101st Airborne Division considered the occupation of the fitebase a successful operation. Air strikes and artillery fire had killed an estimated 400 of the NVA troops concentrated around the base, and by massing against it the enemy had left major cache areas unguarded elsewhere, opening the way for several productive allied sweeps.

In August and September, the story of FSB Ripcord was repeated at FSB O'Reilly, another allied firebase menacing the A Shau Valley. From 6 August to 16 September, the NVA mortared the base and massed troops around it in defiance of allied artillery and air attacks which included 19 B-52 Arc Light missions. The South Vietnamese Joint General Staff decided to abandon the base before the fall monsoon restricted supporting air operations, and by 7 October all of the defenders, elements of the 1st ARVN Regiment, had been extracted by helicopter. In two months of heavy contact around O'Reilly, the 1st ARVN claimed to have killed over 500 North Vietnamese while losing 61 of its own men.[51]

As the summer ended, the military situation in MR 1 remained ambiguous. In areas where the allies were strong, such as Quang Nam Province, the enemy maintained a persistent but declining level of small-scale activity and avoided major contact. However, the

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A 194245

Marines from the 1st Military Police Battalion near Da Nang search for hidden Viet Cong. LCpl Bobby Rose, in the foreground, uses a metal rod to prod a haypile for any enemy who might have sought refuge there. The Viet Cong were adept at evading pursuers.

Communists vigorously protected their most important base areas and supply routes, especially in northern MR 1, and their pressure on FSBs Ripcord and O'Reilly indicated that they still had enough strength to exploit allied points of weakness. Further confusing the allies' anticipation of enemy actions, documents captured during the summer appeared to MACV analysts to suggest the enemy would renew emphasis on large-scale attacks as well as enjoining continued guerrilla activity.[52]

Late in 1970, Lieutenant General John R. Chaisson, Deputy Chief of Staff (Plans and Programs) at HQMC and a former director of MACV's Combat Operations Center, summed up the enemy's strategy and offered an explanation for its apparent contradictions:

> For the past five years the enemy has employed a mixed strategy, which may be defined as the sum total of violence perpetrated against a variety of GVN and U.S. targets by a spectrum of enemy forces with distinct organizational characteristics, intended purposes and doctrines. The enemy's strategy is also "mixed" in a geographic sense, with the level (as well as the causes) of violence differing markedly from one locale to another. In a given area, he is liable within the same short time frame to strike at hamlet officials, PF outposts, ARVN forces on sweeps, and U.S. fire bases . . . . He exploited weakness or carelessness by attacking. And while his directives stressed some target categories (such as combined action platoons) more than others, his actual attacks reflected tactical opportunism.
>
> That in different areas of the country we have seen different enemy styles and targets should not be attributed *a priori* to his deliberate choice. In various areas he may not have the wide range of strategic options we have attributed to him . . . . He may be impeded by the U.S./GVN actions, or by command-and-control problems, or by the decentralized, localized nature of the war.[53]

In MR 1, more than in any other region of South Vietnam, the enemy had available their entire range of military options, from large-unit offensives to guerrilla raids and terrorism. The diminishing level of actual combat did not diminish the continuing enemy threat. To be prepared to counter any possible Communist assault, MACV and XXIV Corps wanted to retain strong American forces in reserve in MR 1 until

quite late in the Keystone Robin and subsequent troop redeployments. Their effort to maintain this reserve in the face of reduced Service budgets and manpower strengths forced radical changes in the Marines' withdrawal schedule during the last weeks of the summer campaign.

Deployment Plans Change: More Marines Stay Longer

Since the start of redeployment planning, MACV had favored a rapid clearing out of the Marines from I Corps, both to simplify command and administrative relationships and to trade Marine aviation spaces withdrawn for Army ground troops able to remain in-country. Repeatedly, Army manpower shortages had forced slowdowns of the Marine withdrawal. Indeed, as Lieutenant General Van Ryzin later put it, "The conditions of the Army and the Marine Corps dictated the redeployment. I don't care what Abrams said or what the JCS said or what the President said, conditions were such that things . . . work[ed] themselves out."[54]

This pattern repeated itself early in August, causing major revisions in the timetable for Marine withdrawals and for activation of the 3d MAB. In mid-summer, plans seemed set for pulling out about 18,000 Marines before 15 October in Keystone Robin Alpha and 9,400 more by 31 December in Keystone Robin Bravo. At the beginning of the new year, the 3d MAB Headquarters would go into operation as III MAF Headquarters redeployed.

Between 1 and 4 August, however, the JCS informed General Abrams, through CincPac, that reductions in the Army's budget and manpower would leave that Service unable to maintain the troop strength in Vietnam envisioned to be retained in current redeployment plans. The JCS directed Abrams to suggest revisions of the withdrawal timetable to take this fact into account, and in particular they instructed him to consider postponement of some Marine redeployments.

Abrams replied to the Joint Chiefs on 6 August. He reaffirmed the need to keep strong forces in Military Region 1 to counter possible large-scale enemy efforts to disrupt Vietnamization and pacification. He proposed a new withdrawal plan under which 50,000 men, including the previously planned 18,000 Marines, would leave as scheduled by 15 October. A second increment, Keystone Robin Bravo, consisting of 40,000 men, all but 1,900 of them Army and the rest Navy and Air Force, would be out by 31 December. The remaining 60,000 of the 150,000 promised by President Nixon in April would redeploy between 1 January and 1 May 1971. This contingent would include about 11,000 Marines, leaving 12,600 still in-country, who would withdraw between 1 May and 30 June. This proposal, which reduced Army strength in Vietnam more quickly while relying on the Marines to maintain allied power in MR 1, received prompt approval from the JCS. Although review and final acceptance of the plan by the Secretary of Defense and the President took several more weeks, the Services in mid-August, on the advice of the Chairman of the JCS and with the permission of the Secretary of Defense, began detailed planning on the basis of it.[55]

These changes left III MAF with a much lengthened withdrawal schedule. The 5th Marines, instead of redeploying almost on the heels of the 7th Marines, now would not leave until late spring of the following year, and aviation withdrawals would be slowed as well. Activation of the MAB would have to be postponed for at least another five or six months, and the MAF, division, and wing headquarters would have to remain in-country for the same length of time. General McCutcheon and his staff now confronted a problem anticipated by a III MAF staff officer back in May: "When you start . . . getting a MAF of about 27[000], you get yourself in a pretty good hum, because you have a hell of a time balancing off a force like that. It's . . . too doggone big to be a MAB, and it's an awful small MAF . . . ."[56]

Marine commanders and staffs viewed this change in withdrawal timetables without enthusiasm. For the Marine Corps as a whole, it meant major readjustments in recruiting requirements and in personnel assignment and separation policies. For III MAF, it necessitated a hurried revision of the troop list for Keystone Robin Alpha. Throughout its redeployment planning, III MAF had tried to maintain a balance between combat and service and support elements, so that combat units remaining in-country after each withdrawal would have ample maintenance, transport, engineer, medical, and other assistance. In planning Keystone Robin Alpha, III MAF had violated this rule on the assumption that the 5th Marines, scheduled for redeployment in Keystone Robin Bravo and sure to cease combat operations soon after 15 October, could get along for a short time with less than the normal support for a regiment. Therefore, they had included extra support personnel in Robin Alpha to

make room in the smaller Robin Bravo for the 5th Marines and the units deleted in June from Alpha. Now with the 5th Marines due to remain in combat four or five months longer than expected, III MAF had to extricate additional support units from Keystone Robin Alpha. Some of the affected units already were cancelling requisitions, turning over cantonments and equipment to the Vietnamese, and preparing for September stand downs, so whatever changes in the troop list were going to be made would have to be made quickly.[57]

Accordingly, in mid-August, Lieutenant General McCutcheon proposed to General Abrams the deletion of a total of 2,395 Marine spaces from the Keystone Robin Alpha redeployment. Some of these spaces would be filled, for McCutcheon wanted to withdraw an additional jet squadron, VMFA-314 (which Fiscal Year 1971 budget limits on the Marines' monthly aircraft sortie rate had rendered superfluous in Vietnam); the 1st 175mm Gun Battery; a detachment of the 5th Communications Battalion; and Company C, 1st Tank Battalion, the last Marine tank unit in Vietnam. This would leave 1,550 Marine Corps Keystone Robin Alpha spaces which McCutcheon said would have to be reassigned to other Services or taken out of Marine combat units. General Abrams quickly approved these alterations and agreed to shift the 1,550 spaces to the Army. Early in September McCutcheon's plan to stop the stand-down of several of the affected units at once was also approved while awaiting final JCS acceptance of the proposed changes.[58]

These actions came too late to halt the departure of two important Marine support units. On 22 August, the 9th Engineer Battalion and most of the 7th Engineer Battalion began embarkation. Their departure left the 1st Marine Division, still responsible for the same TAOR it had had at the beginning of the year, with less than half of its former engineer support.[59]

The authorities in Washington accepted McCutcheon's proposals, and the Marines' share of the Keystone Robin Alpha redeployment finally was fixed at a little over 17,000 men. No Marines would withdraw in Keystone Robin Bravo between 15 October and 31 December, but probably in March and April of 1971 over 11,000, including the headquarters of the MAF, division, and wing, would go out in Keystone Robin Charlie. This would leave in Vietnam about 13,000 Marines of the 3d MAB, 2d CAG, and logistic rollup force whose exact date of departure remained to be set.[60]

The final Marine troop list for Keystone Robin Alpha, issued on 29 September, reflected the last minute changes arranged by McCutcheon. The 175mm Gun Battery had been added to the roster. Company C, 1st Tank Battalion was now scheduled to redeploy. The detachment from the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion had been reduced in size from 376 men to 245. The 1st MP Battalion had been dropped from the list, but the 3d remained under orders to leave and in fact had embarked before the final troop list was issued. The 7th and 9th Engineers had already left. Four fixed-wing squadrons—VMFAs -122 and -314, VMA(AW)-242, and VMCJ-1—and one helicopter squadron, HMM-161, made up the bulk of 1st MAW's contribution. They would be accompanied out of Vietnam by Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron (H&MS) 13, Marine Airbase Squadron (MABS) 13, the housekeeping units of MAG-13 which was standing down, and detachments from other aviation support units. Over 1,100 CAP Marines were still to go. Many of the support and service troops had begun preparing for departure in mid-August, and most of the air and ground combat units were in the process of following them by the end of September.[61]

The abrupt changes in withdrawal timetables and troop lists forced reexamination of plans for the 3d MAB. The brigade's activation now would be delayed for almost six months, and as a result its probable time in combat in Vietnam would be very short. In mid-August, Major General Widdecke's 1st Marine Division staff proposed to General McCutcheon that the MAB headquarters be formed around 15 October, as initially planned, to control the two RLTs and the aircraft groups remaining after Keystone Robin Alpha. They argued that with Marine manpower so much reduced, a brigade could manage the remaining troops as efficiently as could the understrength MAF, division, and wing headquarters and could do it with fewer personnel, thus saving expense to the Marine Corps and allowing MAF, division, and wing staffs to redeploy on schedule. McCutcheon did not adopt this plan, preferring to retain the wing and division until after the next Marine withdrawal.[62]

The new redeployment schedule also made necessary a reexamination of the issue of adding a fourth infantry battalion to the MAB. Early in August, General McCutcheon, adopting the proposal of his staff, had recommended to FMFPac the exchange of the brigade's heavy artillery and tanks and possibly of a fixed-wing squadron for more infantry, and

FMFPac had given tentative approval. During September, XXIV Corps Headquarters informed McCutcheon that the MAB definitely would be responsible for defense of both the Rocket Belt and Da Nang airfield. This information confirmed the need for more infantry, but at the same time inclusion of the 175mm guns, the tanks, and an additional jet squadron in Keystone Robin Alpha took away most of the units McCutcheon had planned to trade for the extra battalion. A memorandum from Major General Widdecke, Commanding General, 1st Marine Division, to General McCutcheon reflected the division's concern over having sufficient infantry units to protect the Da Nang TAOR: "The outer perimeter of Da Nang, now the AO of the 1st Marines, is a large one and even with four battalions (including 1st Battalion, 5th Marines) still must be reinforced during high threat periods to reduce the enemy rocket capabilities. As the more distant forces are withdrawn the outer perimeter forces become even more vulnerable . . . . This situation is further aggravated by the redeployment of most of the service support units presently located in the NSDC and SSDC who provide forces for the security and defense of much of the area west of Da Nang."[63] At the end of September, the issue remained unsettled, with the III MAF and division staffs still hoping to secure the additional infantry.[64]

Although questions of MAB organization remained unresolved, the timetable for Marine withdrawal from Vietnam had taken final form. It would undergo no more radical changes. For the remaining months of 1970, III MAF could look forward to major strength reductions and repositioning of troops. The Marines would continue pacification activities, and they would renew efforts to eradicate the centers of enemy strength within their TAOR.

CHAPTER 5

Offensives and Redeployments: Imperial Lake, Catawba Falls, and Keystone Robin Alpha, July-October 1970

Preliminaries to Imperial Lake—Operation Imperial Lake—Keystone Robin Alpha Redeployments Begin Operation Catawba Falls—The Regiments Realign

Preliminaries to Imperial Lake

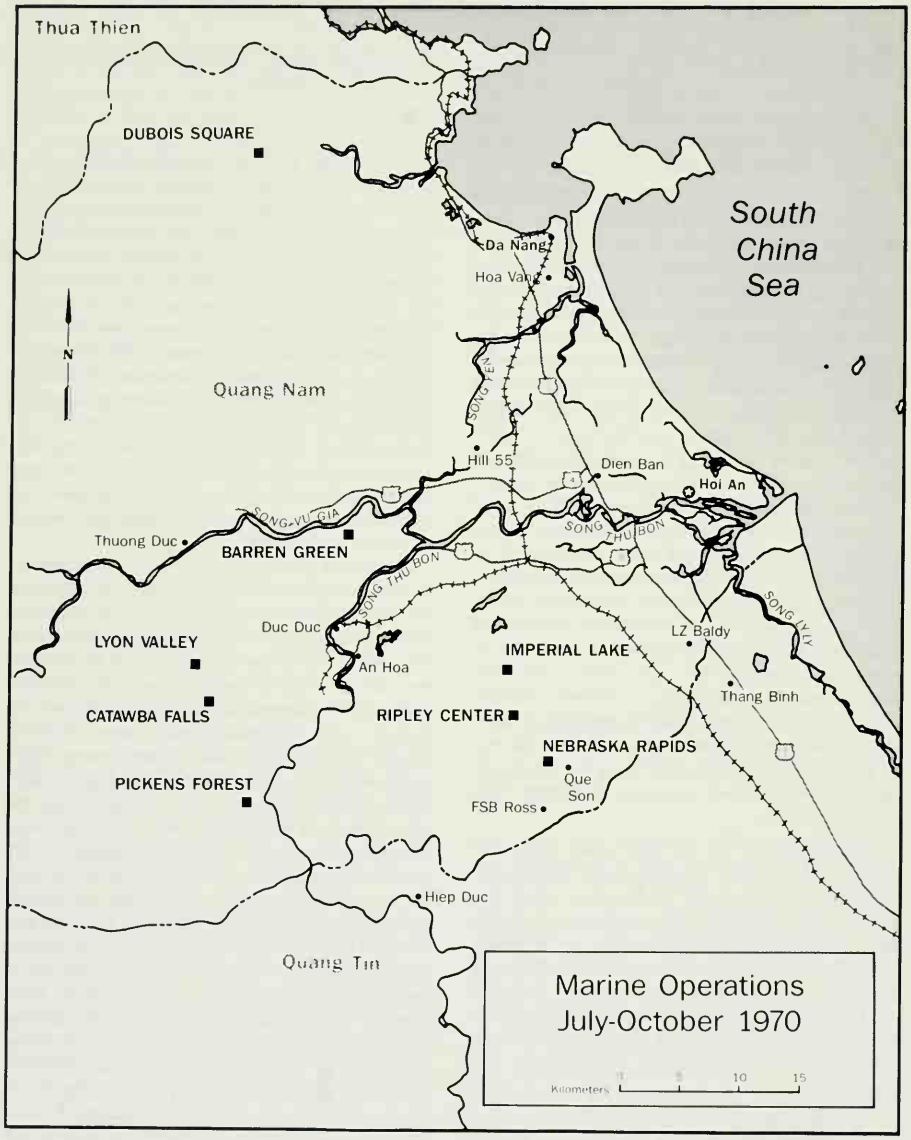
While battalions of the 7th Marines swept the hills west of the Thu Bon during Operation Pickens Forest, the staffs of the regiment and the 1st Marine Division kept much of their attention fixed further to the east on the Que Son Mountains. This range, which projects toward the coast from the rugged, jungle-covered mountains of Base Area 112 about 20 miles south of Da Nang, long had constituted a major military problem for the allies. From its hilltops, as Colonel Edmund G. Derning, Jr., commander of the 7th Marines, put it, "You could see all of Da Nang; you could see any airplane that took off; you had complete observation . . . of the whole terrain up to the north."[1] The canopied ravines and numerous caves of the range sheltered Communist headquarters, hospitals, supply dumps, and training and rest camps. Innumerable infiltration routes connecting hinterland base areas with the coastal rice fields and hamlets ran through the tortuous terrain. Here North Vietnamese regulars and main force Viet Cong often massed for operations in the lowlands, and guerrilla units gathered for training or political indoctrination. A 1st Marine Division staff officer called the Que Sons "a geographical tragedy . . . . If those mountains were not there, the war, as far as the NVA or the Viet Cong are concerned, would have been over years ago in Quang Nam Province."[2]

Since late spring, the 7th Marines had maintained forces in the Que Sons. The effort began with a multi-company operation by the 3d Battalion in late May and early June which resulted in numerous small contacts and discoveries of enemy camps and hospitals. From the results of this operation, Colonel Derning concluded that "it didn't take a battalion to go into the Que Son[s]."[3] In late June, he proposed, and Major General Widdecke approved, a plan for keeping a reinforced Marine rifle company continually in the mountains.

Thereafter, throughout July and the first part of August, company after company from the 7th Marines spent five days at a time combing the ridges and ravines. Each company went in by helicopter and was reinforced with an additional rifle platoon, an engineer detachment, and a forward air controller. By day, the company deployed in platoon patrols and ambushes to cover a search area assigned on the basis of current intelligence and reconnaissance information, and by night it pulled into defensive positions. At the end of five days, helicopters would land a relieving company in a zone covered by the out-going unit.[4] The companies had many small contacts with enemy parties and uncovered a growing number of installations. In one day, 3 July, for example, Company I of the 3d Battalion killed four NVA in two encounters, lost one Marine killed, and found a large cave containing weapons, food, and medical supplies. Marine commanders believed that this continuous pressure was disrupting enemy operations by denying the NVA and VC use of their bases.[5]

In addition to pursuing the VC/NVA aggressively in small-unit patrols, the 7th Marines also developed deceptive measures to conceal the actual movement of units by helicopter within its area of operation. Normal practice was for the troops to board the helicopters, lash in, then sit upright next to the windows (assuming the zone was not hot) as they entered the landing zone. Recognizing that enemy observers around the Que Sons got fairly accurate troop counts and knew the precise locations of some Marine units, Colonel Derning changed tactics. In a given zone the unit might enter by helicopter with the Marines visible through the windows. Rather than deploy, the Marines would lay down on the floor of the aircraft and the aircraft would exit the zone, giving the impression that a unit had landed. In another zone, the tactic might be reversed with the unit unseen on the way in but visible when extracted. A third option was to keep the Marines concealed on the way into the zone, crawl the unit off quickly, and exit the zone, making it appear that the helicopter had gone empty both into and out of the zone. Since the enemy had observers throughout the Que Son mountain area, the intent was to confuse the reports to enemy command posts, thus immobilizing or slowing down the movement and reaction time of enemy forces.[6]

On 5 August, the 7th Marines changed com-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DUBOIS SQUARE
Da Nang
Hoa Vang
South China Sea
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Quang Nam
SONG VU GIA
Hill 55
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SONG THU BON
Thuong Duc
BARREN GREEN
SONG THU BON
SONG VU GIA
Duc Duc
LZ Baldy
LYON VALLEY
IMPERIAL LAKE
An Hoa
Thang Binh
CATAWBA FALLS
RIPLEY CENTER
NEBRASKA RAPIDS
PICKENS FOREST
Que Son
FSB Ross
Hiep Duc
Quang Tin
Marine Operations
July-October 1970
Kilometers
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15

manders. Colonel Derning, his Vietnam tour ended, handed the regiment over to his relief, Colonel Robert H. Piehl. Colonel Piehl, a native of Wisconsin, had enlisted in the Marines in 1940 and two years later entered the United States Naval Academy, graduating in 1945. A Korean War veteran, he came to the 7th Marines from the 3d Marine Division on Okinawa, where he had served as Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3. Under Colonel Piehl's direction, the 7th Marines completed Operation Pickens Forest and continued and enlarged its campaign in the Que Sons.

At this point, the 1st Battalion was engaged in patrolling around LZ Baldy while the 3d Battalion kept up counterguerrilla and pacification operations in the Que Son Valley and provided companies in rotation for the continuing search of the mountains. These two battalions retained these areas of operation until they ceased combat activity in middle and late September.[7]

Using elements of the 1st and 3d Battalions and reinforcements from the division reserve (1st Battalion, 5th Marines) on 13 August, Colonel Piehl expanded his regiment's company-size effort in the Que Sons into a series of battalion-size operations, later grouped for reporting purposes under the codename Operation Ripley Center. Besides continuing to disrupt enemy facilities in the central and eastern Que Sons, these operations were aimed at capturing elements of *Front 4 Headquarters* which allied intelligence sources believed were hiding in the mountains. In conjunction with Ripley Center, the South Vietnamese launched Operation Duong Son 4/70 in the eastern Que Sons with two battalions of the 51st Regiment, the 101st RF Battalion, and a troop from the 17th Armored Cavalry Squadron, all under control of the 1st Armored Brigade Headquarters.[8]

Operation Ripley Center began on the 13th when three rifle companies—Companies I and L of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, and Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines—deployed from helicopters in two landing zones in the south-central Que Sons. Company A then was serving as the division Pacifier company, and the entire operation began under command of Lieutenant Colonel Cornelius F. ("Doc") Savage, Jr., of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, whose mobile battalion CP had been placed temporarily under the 7th Marines.

Ripley Center continued for the rest of the month. The 5th Marines' elements returned to Da Nang on the 15th, leaving the 7th Marines' Companies I, L, and D to continue the search. As soon as Operation Pickens Forest ended on 24 August, Lieutenant Colonel Albers' 2d Battalion, 7th Marines was airlifted directly from western BA 112 to a landing zone in the Que Sons to take over the operation. Companies from this battalion swept north and east farther into the mountains.

Neither the composite force under Savage nor Albers' battalion found any trace of *Front 4 Headquarters*, but they uncovered numerous base camps and small supply caches and had brief firefights with enemy groups. In the most significant contact of the operation, on 30 August, Company F of the 2d Battalion ambushed 12 Viet Cong. The Marines killed nine and captured three, one of whom identified the group as a hamlet guerrilla unit on its way to an indoctrination meeting. The operation ended on 31 August, and the 2d Battalion moved at once into Operation Imperial Lake. In Ripley Center, the Marines had killed 25 Communists and captured eight, while losing 27 of their own men wounded, mostly from boobytraps. The caves and base camps had yielded an assortment of weapons, food, and documents.[9]

Operation Imperial Lake

In September, a month of new offensives and redeployments for the 1st Marine Division, the 7th Marines launched Operation Imperial Lake, the regiment's most ambitious effort of the year in the Que Sons. Planned by the 1st Marine Division and 7th Marines' staffs while Albers' 2d Battalion was still scouring the hills in Operation Ripley Center, Imperial Lake was targeted against the *Front 4 Headquarters* element which had eluded the earlier American sweeps in the Que Sons. Intelligence sources now believed this unit to be concealed somewhere northeast of Hill 845, one of the highest elevations in the central Que Sons. According to information derived from reconnaissance patrols and from the 7th Marines' spring and summer operations, the same area also might contain headquarters and combat elements of the *R20th*, *V25th*, and *D3d Infantry Battalions*; the *3d*, *T89th*, and *T90th Sapper Battalions*; and the *42d Reconnaissance Battalion*. Units of the *160th Transport Battalion* were also thought to be active in the mountains.

Expecting the enemy to try to evade any sweeping force, the Marines planned to begin Imperial Lake with several hours of artillery and air bombardment of the target area. The Marines' intent was to force the Communists to take cover in their caves and bunkers and

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A 194734

LCpl Lewis A. Raborn of the War Dog Platoon, 1st MP Battalion is shown with Scout Dog Nick in Operation Imperial Lake searching for enemy caches.

stay there while helicopters deployed all four companies of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines into 12 separate landing zones, establishing a cordon around presumed enemy locations. The infantry companies would then drive the NVA/VC into the center. Directly supporting the battalion, the 4.2-inch Mortar Battery of the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines would establish a firebase on Hill 845, and the 1st Platoon, Company D, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion would set up three observation posts surrounding the operation area. Simultaneous with the start of Imperial Lake, two battalions of the 51st ARVN Regiment would begin operations in the Que Sons south and east of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines.[10]

Just after midnight on 31 August, ten batteries* coordinated by Lieutenant Colonel Dickey's 3d Battalion, 11th Marines opened fire in one of the largest single preparatory bombardments delivered by Marine gunners in Vietnam and certainly the largest of the war for the 11th Marines. From FSBs Ross and Ryder, from LZ Baldy, from An Hoa, and from Hill 65, 105mm and 155mm howitzers, 8-inch howitzers, and 175mm guns for six hours rained shells on 53 selected targets in the Que Sons. These targets had been chosen on the basis of information from the 1st Marine Division and 7th Marines intelligence staffs, and the artillerymen carefully had prepared a fire plan for each. By 0645, when the bombardment ended, the batteries had thrown 13,488 shells—a total weight of some 740,000 pounds of metal—into the Que Sons. Two hours of fixed-wing air strikes followed in which 63 tons of ordnance were delivered.[11] The 7th Marines commander, Colonel Piehl, who had recommended a far shorter preparation, years later recalled its effects: "I believe only one or two enemy bodies were found, although admittedly many may have been sealed up in the numerous caves in the area."[12] At 0900, the first flights of CH-46s and CH-53s carrying the assault troops dropped into predesignated landing zones.[13]

According to plan, the 2d Battalion command post and two platoons (four 4.2-inch mortars) of Battery W, 3d Battalion, 11th Marines took position on Hill 845, codenamed LZ Vulture. South of Vulture, Company E deployed to form the southwest side of the cordon while Company H filled in to the north and Company F closed in from the east. Company G, held in reserve during the initial assault, landed two hours after the other companies to complete the ring on the southeast. During this first day of the operation, the companies made no contact with the enemy.

For the next four days, Lieutenant Colonel Albers maneuvered his Marines south, east, and north of Landing Zone Vulture, guided by information from the regimental intelligence staff. He continually tried to position his companies so they could quickly envelop any hostile force discovered and prevent it from breaking contact.[14]

On 5 September, in a ravine near LZ Vulture, the Marines finally trapped an enemy unit, estimated later to have been 30-50 North Vietnamese. Company E, sweeping toward the southeast along the ravine, had a man wounded while chasing a lone NVA into a cave. When a helicopter came in to evacuate the wounded

*The batteries involved were: Batteries G, H, and I of 3/11; K, L, and M of 4/11; E and W (155s) of 2/11; the 3d 8-inch Howitzer Battery (-); and the 3d 175mm Gun Battery (-).

man, heavy small arms fire drove it out of the area.* Five other evacuation attempts failed because of the volume of enemy fire. The other three Marine rifle companies worked their way over the rough ground to encircle the contact area and by 2230 they had closed the ring.

From 6-9 September, the Marines fought the encircled North Vietnamese. The enemy resisted tenaciously and skillfully from caves and behind boulders. As always in the mountains, the steepness of the ravine's banks, the many caves, and the thick trees and brush aided the defense. Repeatedly, the Marine companies advanced along the bottom of the ravine or down the sides. Each time they met accurate fire from AK-47s, SKSs, and American-made M14s. Assisted by artillery fire, helicopter gunships, and jet attack aircraft, the Marines tried to eradicate the enemy. Several of the air strikes caused secondary explosions, and Marines claimed they could hear small arms rounds going off in the fires started by bombs and napalm.

As the Marines gradually pressed the NVA back, the fighting at times came to close quarters. On the 8th, for instance, as Company G worked its way down the side of the ravine, small arms fire wounded four Marines. A corpsman went to aid one man and was himself hit. As the company, aided by gunships, fired at the enemy positions, several NVA broke cover and ran. The corpsman, who later died from loss of blood, shot one with his pistol. A Marine with a grenade launcher dispatched another enemy soldier who had bolted for a cave. Two more NVA plunged into the mouth of a cave which the Marines promptly blasted shut with a 106mm recoilless rifle.

On 9 September, with the Marine casualty toll at three dead and 12 wounded, Lieutenant Colonel Albers pulled his rifle companies back from the contested ravine while jets of the 1st MAW in nine strikes dropped over 40 tons of ordnance into it. The air attacks, in the words of the battalion's report, "rearranged the terrain considerably" and sealed up several caves, probably killing many of the NVA. At any event, when the Marines resumed their search of the ravine the following day, they encountered only sporadic sniper fire. During the next couple of days they found several large caves. Two of them contained still-defiant NVA whom the Marines dispatched with bullets and grenades or left to die behind blocked tunnel mouths.[15]

By 12 September, the North Vietnamese in the ravine had been killed, sealed up in their caves, or had slipped through the encircling Marines. Among the enemy dead were a battalion commander and a political officer. Albers' troops resumed routine search and destroy activities. To reduce the risk of his men hitting boobytraps or running into prepared enemy positions, Lieutenant Colonel Albers instituted what he called the "Duck Hunter" scheme of maneuver. Instead of moving through the hills in search of the enemy, most units of the battalion under this plan established numerous day and night ambushes along known enemy trails and at assembly areas and water points and waited, like hunters stalking game, for the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong to come to them. Some came. Between 14 and 30 September, Marines of the 2d Battalion killed 14 enemy.[16]

From LZ Vulture, the four mortars of Battery W, 3d Battalion, 11th Marines helped maintain pressure on the enemy. The Marine gunners fired an average of 170 rounds per day, mostly in evening preemptive bombardment of suspected hostile mortar positions and escape and supply routes.[17]

While Albers' battalion swept the central Que Sons, Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth L. Robinson, Jr.'s 3d Battalion on 5 September began Operation Nebraska Rapids in the flat paddy land south of FSB Ross along Route 534 where the 1st Marine Division TAOR adjoined that of the Americal Division. In this operation, the battalion, with three of its own companies (I, K, and M), Company B of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, and several RF platoons worked in coordination with Americal Division elements. Their mission was to open long-unused Route 534 all the way from LZ Baldy to Hiep Duc, a district town on the upper Song Thu Bon about 12 miles southwest of Ross. Once the Marines and Army troops repaired and secured the road, a South Vietnamese truck convoy would travel along it with supplies for Hiep Duc.

During the four-day operation, Company K protected the Marines of the 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Engineer Battalion as they swept a portion of the highway for mines, repaired it, and installed a temporary bridge. The other three Marine companies searched the nearby countryside for enemy soldiers and

*Referring to the incident years later, Colonel Piehl said the Marine was finally evacuated by helicopter: "The doctor, I believe, cut off several feet of protruding intestine and put a bandage on the wound. When the helo took off, the wounded Marine was holding the bandage with one hand, waving with the other and grinning broadly. . . ." Col Robert H. Piehl, Comments on draft ms, 23Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File).

caches, then moved into position to block for a drive from the south by Americal Division troops. They encountered only small groups of local guerrillas, who harassed the Marines with sniper fire and boobytraps. On 6 September, the ARVN truck convoy made an uneventful round trip from Baldy to Hiep Duc, and two days later the Marines' part of Operation Nebraska Rapids came to an end. In brief exchanges of fire, the Marines had killed two of the enemy, captured one carbine, and detained two Viet Cong suspects while losing one of their own men killed and 13 wounded.[18]

The 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, now under Lieutenant Colonel Franklin A. Hart, Jr., who had taken over command from Lieutenant Colonel Robinson on 6 September, joined Operation Imperial Lake on 13 September. On that date, Company I and a battalion command group were lifted by helicopters into the Que Sons southwest of the 2d Battalion's area of operations. They entered the mountains in response to reports that enemy troops might have moved southward to escape Albers' encircling maneuvers. The 3d Battalion had minor contact with a few enemy but found no major force. On 20 September, with its own Company K, Company H of the 2d Battalion, and Company K of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, the 3d Battalion launched Operation Imperial Lake South in the Que Son foothills southeast of the 2d Battalion's search area. Once again following up intelligence reports, the 3d Battalion was hunting for *Front 4 Headquarters* elements. Hart's Marines did not find the enemy command group, and the number of troops committed to the operation rapidly dwindled. The 5th Marines company left the mountains on 21 September and Company H of the 2d Battalion followed the next day. This left Company K of the 3d Battalion to continue searching the mountains, which it did until relieved by Company I, on the 25th. Company I operated in the mountains until the end of the month.[19]

View of LZ Vulture, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines command post in Operation Imperial Lake. Mortars of Battery W, 11th Marines can be seen in the foreground.

Marine Corps Historical Collection

Lieutenant Colonel Albers' units, meanwhile, were using enemy defectors and other sources of information to make significant discoveries. On 16-17 September, a VC defector led Company F to two company-size base camps of the *91st Sapper Battalion*, and Company G walked into the abandoned camp of another unidentified NVA or VC unit. On 20 September, a squad-size unit from the 2d Battalion command group entered what was probably an abandoned headquarters complex hidden in caves in the slopes of Hill 845 almost underneath the Marine CP and fire base. Here the Marines found about a dozen connected caves, one large enough to contain a log hut, that extended 70 feet into the ground and included a kitchen cavern with running water from an underground stream. Near the headquarters, in 10 more caves, the Marines uncovered a hospital with a primitive operating room and wards radiating out from it; they captured two Viet Cong near the hospital, a nurse and a medical corpsman. The prisoners claimed the installation had been evacuated by guards, staff, and patients immediately after the artillery shelling and air strikes of 31 August. These prisoners and another, a NVA corporal, taken elsewhere proved a rich source of information on enemy units and operations in the Que Sons.[20]

On 18 September, as the 7th Marines prepared to stand down for redeployment, the regiment began reducing its forces in Imperial Lake. Company H of the 2d Battalion returned to Baldy on that date, only to move into the Que Sons again on the 20th in Imperial Lake South. On the 22d, Company F ceased operations in the Que Sons, and the next day Company G, the mortar battery, and the 2d Battalion command group boarded helicopters for the flight back to Baldy. Company E continued combing the Imperial Lake areas of operations for the rest of the month, while Company I of the 3d Battalion maintained a Marine presence in the southern Que Sons.[21]

By the end of September, in 35 contacts, the Marines of the 2d and 3d Battalions in Imperial Lake had killed 30 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong. The 2d Battalion claimed about 20 more killed, most of them trapped in caves during the fight at the ravine. Intensive searches of the rugged terrain had uncovered six major Communist base camps with substantial quantities of weapons, food, and medical supplies. From captured documents and interrogation of the three prisoners, allied intelligence obtained valuable information on the enemy underground and order of battle. Most important, Marine commanders were convinced that the presence of their forces in the Que Sons was disrupting enemy operations and reducing the possibility of large-scale attacks on populated areas. Imperial Lake, therefore, would continue into the fall and winter, with the 5th Marines taking over for the redeploying 7th Marines.[22]

Keystone Robin Alpha Redeployments Begin

By the time the 7th Marines began Operation Imperial Lake, the redeployment of the units of III MAF scheduled for Keystone Robin Alpha was already well under way. On 9 July, the ships carrying Embarkation Unit One of the withdrawal, consisting of elements of the 7th Engineer Battalion, 3d Force Reconnaissance Company, and Force Logistic Command, sailed from Da Nang. Three other embarkation units, made up mostly of detachments of support and service troops, would soon follow. From the 1st MAW, VCMJ-1 flew from Da Nang to its new station at Iwakuni; personnel from various support and service squadrons left Vietnam by ship and plane. Beginning the process of removing Marine aviation from Chu Lai, the A-4s of VMA-311 moved north to Da Nang, where the squadron transferred from MAG-13 to MAG-11.

During August, redeployment of both ground and air units accelerated. From the 1st Marine Division, the 3d Platoon, 1st 8-inch Howitzer Battery; the bulk of the 7th and 9th Engineer Battalions; the 1st Bridge Company (-); and the 1st Force Reconnaissance Company (-) embarked for the United States. The other platoons of the 1st 8-inch Howitzer Battery; Company C, 1st Tank Battalion; and the 3d 175mm Gun Battery ceased combat operations and began preparing for September departures. The 1st MAW gave up one of its medium helicopter squadrons, HMM-161, which on 16-18 August loaded its CH-46Ds on ships for transfer to MCAS El Toro, California. On 24 August, VMFA-115 continued the evacuation of Chu Lai by shifting its base of operations to Da Nang and passing under the control of MAG-11.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A 422854

A cargo hook lifts a CH-46 helicopter from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161 on board a LSD at Tien Sha Deep Water Pier as redeployment begins.

During September, the aircraft wing completed its Keystone Robin Alpha reductions. On 3 September, jets from MAG-13 flew Marine aviation's last combat missions from Chu Lai. MAG-13 spent the rest of the month redeploying its remaining tactical and support squadrons. The last two jet squadrons of the group, VMFAs -122 and -314, joined VMA(AW)-242 from Da Nang in Operation Key Grasp, the second major trans-Pacific flight of redeploying 1st MAW aircraft. Begun on 10 September, this long-water flight ended without serious incident 12 days later. As in the earlier operation Key Wallop, the squadrons stopped for fuel, rest, and repairs at Okinawa, Guam, Wake, Midway, and Kaneohe, Hawaii. VMFA-122 remained at Kaneohe as part of MAG-24 while the other two squadrons continued on to MCAS El Toro. MAG-13's housekeeping squadrons, H&MS-13 and MABS-13, also displaced to El Toro by ship and airlift.[23]

These withdrawals left the 1st MAW, now commanded by Major General Alan J. Armstrong, who had replaced Major General Thrash in July, with two

aircraft groups. Colonel Albert C. Pommerenk's MAG-11 at Da Nang had four fixed-wing squadrons, VMA-311 (A-4Es), VMFA-115 (F-4Bs), VMA(AW)-225 (A-6As), and VMO-2 (OV-10As). At Marble Mountain, MAG-16 under Colonel Lewis C. Street controlled six helicopter squadrons: HML-167 (UH-1Es); HML-367 (AH-1Gs); HMMs -262, -263, and -364 (CH-46Ds); and HMH-463(CH-53Ds). Among them, these squadrons possessed over 80 fixed-wing aircraft and 170 helicopters.[24]

The most complex and potentially dangerous part of the Keystone Robin Alpha redeployment began in September. This was the takeover of the 7th Marines' area of operations by the 5th Marines. All three of the division's infantry regiments would have to shift position to accomplish this. The 7th Marines would give up its bases at Ross and Baldy and extricate its companies from the Que Sons; the 5th Marines would move southeast from An Hoa and the Thuong Duc corridor; and the 1st Marines would send forces to the southwest to fill in behind the 5th Marines. Complicated enough in themselves, these rearrangements would involve the portions of the 1st Marine Division TAOR closest to enemy bases and most exposed to attack. Hence the redeployment would have to be conducted so as to avoid as far as possible any slackening of allied pressure on the NVA and VC and to deny the Communists any chance of disrupting the movement with a major offensive.

As the Marines thinned out their forces in Quang Nam, ARVN and Korean units would have to assume new TAORs or enlarge the ones they already had. During August and September, III MAF, XXIV Corps, I Corps, QDSZ, and the 2d Korean Marine Brigade negotiated who would take over what. Initially, the Marines wanted the South Vietnamese to relieve them of the defense of An Hoa, FSBs Ross and Ryder, and LZ Baldy, but the ARVN proved unwilling to enlarge its responsibilities that rapidly. Early in September, Lieutenant General Lam agreed with Lieutenant General McCutcheon that one battalion of the 51st ARVN would occupy An Hoa, but for the time being Marines would continue to defend the other major bases. Even at An Hoa, the South Vietnamese would accept responsibility for only a portion of that sprawling combat base. Marines would defend the rest of it until their engineers could remove equipment, dismantle buildings, and destroy bunkers and entrenchments.[25]

On 3 September, the 1st Marine Division issued a warning order to its subordinate commands detailing the plans and timetable for the shift of regiments. The operation would begin on 5 September when the 5th Marines would place one rifle company under operational control of the 7th Marines to relieve the 7th Marines' CUPP company in the hamlets along Route 1 and on Route 535 between Baldy and Ross. Six days later, the 5th Marines was scheduled to turn over An Hoa to the 51st ARVN and begin moving its 2d Battalion to LZ Baldy. At this point a complex series of temporary exchanges of battalions between regiments would begin, designed to maintain continuity of operations, especially in the 7th Marines TAOR, while allowing the battalions and regimental headquarters of the 7th Marines gradually to cease combat activity. The 2d Battalion, 5th Marines upon arrival at Baldy would come under the 7th Marines; at the same time the 7th Marines' 1st Battalion would be standing down and preparing to embark. On 20 September, the headquarters of the 5th Marines would begin operations at LZ Baldy, having moved there from Hill 37 and Camp Reasoner. The 5th Marines would then assume control of the 7th Marines' TAOR, with its own 2d Battalion and the 2d and 3d battalions of the 7th Marines. On the same day, the 1st Marines would take control of the 5th Marines' 3d Battalion in the Thuong Duc corridor, which now would become part of the 1st Marines' TAOR. Between 20 September and 4 October, companies of the 1st Marines would relieve the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines in its positions along the Vu Gia River, and the battalion would go south to Baldy to rejoin its parent regiment. During the same period, the regimental Headquarters Company and the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 7th Marines would end active operations and prepare to sail for the United States.[26]

The final 1st Marine Division order for the redeployment, issued on 8 September, modified the original timetable to allow for expected delays in completing the partial demolition and the ARVN takeover of An Hoa. The 5th Marines would now turn over formal responsibility for An Hoa to the 51st ARVN on 20 September, but most of the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, would not move immediately to Baldy. The 2d Battalion would remain at An Hoa protecting the base and Liberty Bridge and Road until the last Marine engineers left An Hoa. The relief of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, on the other hand, would be speeded up so that it could reassemble at Baldy by 24 September.[27]

On 11 September, plans for the enlargement of South Vietnamese and Korean responsibilities reach-

ed completion. At a conference of commanders of the 1st Marine Division, Quang Da Special Zone, and the 2d Korean Marine Brigade, at which Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, the assistant division commander, represented the Marines, the Koreans agreed to take over the eastern portion of the 7th Marines' TAOR between Route 1 and the South China Sea* and to extend the boundaries of their enclave to the north and west. Quang Da Special Zone accepted a 1st Marine Division proposal that the 51st ARVN take charge of a TAOR around An Hoa covering most of the An Hoa Basin and the Arizona Territory. The South Vietnamese refused, however, to accept a definite tactical area of responsibility around FSB Ross, claiming that the RF company they planned to station there lacked the men to cover it. Brigadier General Simmons and the QDSZ commander decided to give the RF company "a smaller, floating boundary to be determined at a later date by mutual agreement." This meant that Marine defense responsibilities at Ross would continue for some time.[28]

The relief of the 7th Marines began on schedule. Captain Marshall B. "Buck" Darling's Company G of the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines on 5 September moved from An Hoa to LZ Baldy and the Que Son Valley. There it took the place of Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines in the Combined Unit Pacification Program, distributing its rifle squads in nine hamlets along Routes 1 and 535. The relief actually was an exchange of personnel, as about 55 percent of the Marines of Company A, those whose length of time in Vietnam did not qualify them for redeployment, transferred to Company G and remained in their assigned hamlets. Their presence eased the integration of the new rifle squads with the Popular Force platoons with which they would live and fight. Within a week of the relief, Company G and the PFs resumed the usual routine of patrols and ambushes. On 9 September, Company A joined the rest of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines at the former 9th Engineer Battalion cantonment near Da Nang, where redeploying units of the 1st Marine Division made their final preparations for embarkation.[29]

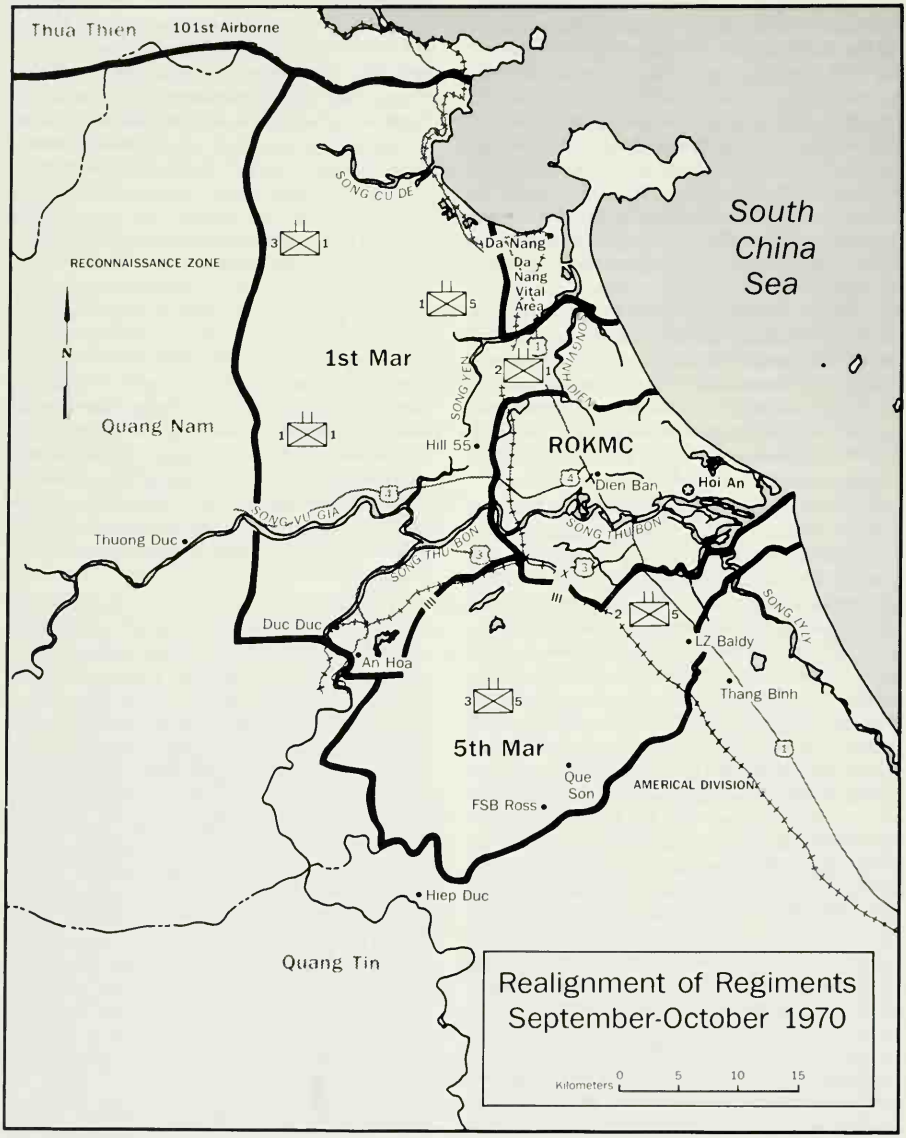
Operation Catawba Falls

To throw the enemy off balance during the 5th Marines' move From An Hoa and the Vu Gia River Valley, the 1st Marine Division carried out a large-scale diversionary artillery attack in Base Area 112. This attack had its origins early in August in plans for a conventional infantry operation. At that time, intelligence reports located the headquarters of the *38th NVA Regiment* and a number of other NVA and VC combat and support units in the mountains northwest of the area swept by the 7th Marines in Pickens Forest. In response to these reports, Colonel Clark V. Judge, commander of the 5th Marines, had his staff begin planning for a two-battalion operation in the area, to be called Operation Catawba Falls.[30] On 26 August, as a preliminary to launching the main operation, a command group and two 105mm howitzers of Battery D, 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, with the 3d Platoon of Company I, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines as a security force, landed from helicopters deep in Base Area 112 on Fire Support Base Dagger. The base, intended as the center of the proposed operation, covered the flat top of Ban Co, a peak 1,031 meters high which lies about 10 miles west of An Hoa. About 100 by 400 meters in area with sheer cliffs dropping away on all sides, Dagger overlooked the maze of ridges and valleys in which the enemy were believed to be concealed.[31]

On 16 September, the 1st Marine Division issued orders for the execution of Operation Catawba Falls, but in a form far different from that originally contemplated. The orders called for a two-phase operation. Phase I, to be conducted by the 11th Marines under direct control of the division commader, Major General Widdecke, would consist of intensive bombardment of the target area by howitzers and mortars airlifted into FSB Dagger. Quickly emplaced, these weapons would fire rapidly for a short period of time, alternating their shelling of selected targets with intensive air strikes. This phase would begin on 18 September. A second phase, to consist of a sweep of the objective area by the 5th Marines, was included in the original orders, but only as a ruse to confuse enemy intelligence. Division headquarters hoped that the Communists, battered by the shelling and bombing, would spend the crucial period of the American redeployment preparing to resist or trying to evade the threatened infantry assault rather than conducting an offensive of their own.[32]

Responsibility for conducting Phase I fell to Major George W. Ryhanych's 2d Battalion, 11th Marines. Ryhanych and his staff began detailed planning for the attack on 15 September. Given little time for their fire

*This area constituted a narrow corridor bounded on the north by the Korean TAOR and on the south by that of the Americal Division.


Thua Thien
101st Airborne
SONG CU DE
Da Nang
Da Nang Vital Area
South China Sea
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Hill 55
ROKMC
Dien Ban
Hoi An
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Thuong Duc
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Duc Duc
An Hoa
LZ Baldy
SONG VAY
Thang Binh
5th Mar
Que Son
AMERICAL DIVISION
FSB Ross
Hiep Duc
Quang Tin
Realignment of Regiments
September-October 1970
Kilometers 0 5 10 15

planning, they worked long hours allocating the 10,000 rounds allowed for the attack among 160 targets furnished by intelligence. They developed a daily schedule for firing and for suspending artillery fire periodically to allow jets of the 1st MAW to make bombing runs. To carry out the plan, Ryhanych would have the two 105mm howitzers from Battery D already on Dagger, two more 105s from Battery E of his battalion, and two from Battery H of the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines.* Ryhanych also had available six 4.2-inch mortars, four from his own battalion and two from the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, and four 155mm howitzers, two from the 2d Battalion and two from the 3d. All 16 of these artillery pieces would be emplaced on Dagger. For still heavier long-range support, Ryhanych could call on the 1st 175mm Gun Battery at An Hoa and a platoon of Army 175s from the 2d Battalion, 92d U.S. Artillery, located on Hill 65. For this operation, the Army unit was integrated into the 2d Battalion's communications and fire direction system.[33]

On 17 September at 0800, the first of a total of 76 helicopters—CH-53Ds of the 1st MAW and Army CH-54s—began lifting guns, crews, ammunition, and equipment from Hill 65, An Hoa, and Baldy to FSB Dagger. Detachments of engineers and artillerymen swarmed over the mountain top preparing gun positions and helicopter landing zones. They were hampered in their labors by a shortage of equipment. The one minidozer on Dagger broke down after a few hours, as did a second sent in to replace it. The single chain saw "was exceedingly dull and broke down on the second day of operation." With hand tools and explosives, the Marines continued work throughout the day and into the night of the 17th. They finished gun positions and other installations and distributed thousands of rounds of ammunition.

By dawn on 18 September, 14 artillery pieces (two of the mortars were held in reserve) were emplaced and prepared to fire, and 10,000 rounds of ammunition lay ready for their crews' hands. Major Ryhanych, who remained on Dagger for the first two days of the operation, organized his guns and crews into a provisional composite battery commanded by his battalion operations officer, Major Robert T. Adams. Under him, Adams had three sections, one of 105mm howitzers, one of 4.2-inch mortars, and one of 155mm howitzers, each commanded by a first lieutenant. A central fire direction center controlled all three sections.

At 0300 on the 18th, the provisional battery opened fire. For the rest of the day, howitzers and mortars methodically pounded each suspected base camp, cave, bunker complex, and troop position. At intervals, the battery ceased firing while jets delivered their strikes. It became apparent as the day went on that the original fire plan could not be carried out in the two days initially allotted for the operation without exhausting the gunners. The resulting fatigue would increase the risk of accidents and firing errors. Therefore, on the 18th Major General Widdecke ordered the operation extended through 20 September. The following day, another division order postponed the end of Plase I to 21 September. This order also declared that "Preparation for Phase II having accomplished its intended diversion mission . . ., Phase II [is] postponed indefinitely . . . . Op[eration] Catawba Falls will terminate concurrently with termination of Phase I."[34]

Throughout the 19th and 20th and part of the 21st, the battery on Dagger kept up its rain of destruction on Base Area 112. Preliminary intelligence reports indicated that the enemy had been hit hard in certain of the target areas, and additional fire was directed there. The soft sand and loam which formed a shallow layer over most of the flat mountain top caused recoiling howitzers to shift position and required the mortar crews periodically to dig out and reset the base plates of their weapons, but hard work and ingenuity overcame these problems. During the second day of firing, heaps of trash and expended cartridge cases "became an almost overwhelming problem," but the riflemen of the 3d Platoon, Company I, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, who manned the firebase perimeter throughout the operation, helped the gunners dump the trash over the side of the mountain and also furnished what Major Ryhanych called "invaluable" assistance in moving ammunition to the guns. The Marines burned the mound of trash when they left the firebase.

Operation Catawba Falls ended at noon on 21 September. The weapons and crews of the composite battery were lifted by helicopter back to their permanent positions. Between 18 and 21 September, Major Ryhanych's artillerymen had fired over 11,500 rounds, and jets of the 1st MAW had dropped 141 tons of bombs. Allied intelligence later estimated that Operation Catawba Falls had inflicted casualties on several ene-

*Battery H was under operational control of the 2d Battalion at this time as part of the Keystone Robin Alpha troop rearrangements.

my units and destroyed a suspected training center. Further indicating the success of the operation, no major enemy attacks or harassment marred the relief of the 7th Marines by the 5th Marines.[35]

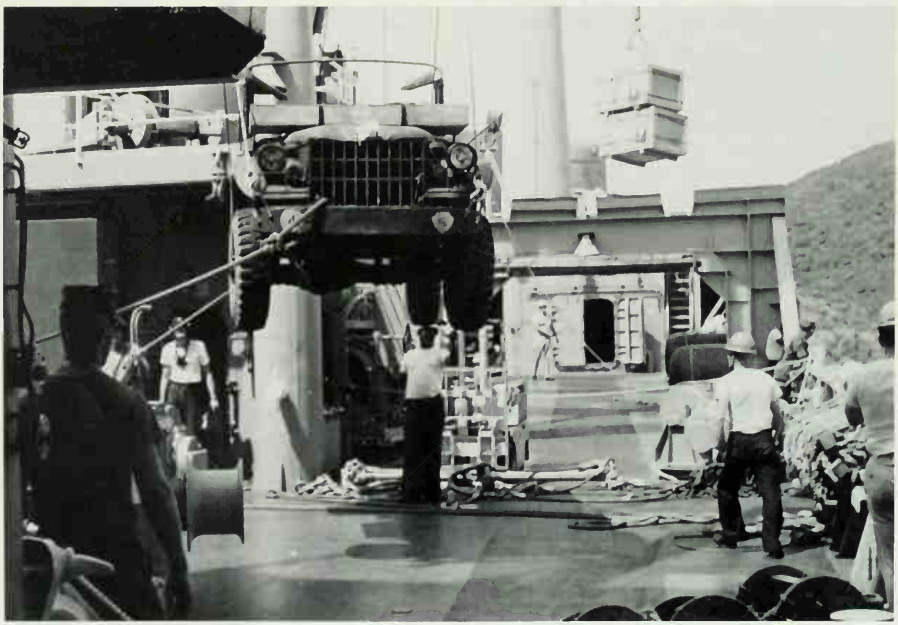
The Regiments Realign

Protected by the artillery fire of Catawba Falls, the regiments of the 1st Marine Division carried out their complex exchanges of position. On 18 September, companies of Lieutenant Colonel Robert P. Rose's 1st Battalion, 1st Marines began relieving units of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines on Hills 52, 65, and 37. The relieving companies came under temporary operational control of the 5th Marines' battalion, which in turn on 20 September passed under the control of the 1st Marines. During this relief, the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines took command of Company M, the 1st Marines' CUPP unit, which had its squads defending hamlets along Route 4. Company M was part of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines. On the 21st, Battery A, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines assigned direct support of Rose's battalion, moved its six 105mm howitzers and two 155mm howitzers from Hill 10 to Hill 65. The following day, the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines assumed control of its new TAOR.

To fill in for the 1st Battalion as it extended itself to the southwest, the other battalions of the 1st Marines enlarged and rearranged their operational boundaries. The 2d Battalion surrendered a strip of the southwestern part of its TAOR between Route 1 and the coast to the Korean Marines while extending westward to take over Hill 55. The 3d Battalion sent companies southward to occupy several square miles of the old 1st Battalion TAOR including OP (Observation Post) Reno. By the end of September, as a result of these realignments, the 1st Marines' TAOR extended from the Cu De River on the north southwestward to where the Vu Gia and Thu Bon Rivers join. Near the coast, it abutted the enlarged Korean enclave, which extended well north of the Thu Bon-Ky Lam River line.

A jeep is lowered onto the deck of the cargo ship Saint Louis *(LKA 116), as the 7th Marines and Marine Aircraft Group 13 begin their redeployment from Vietnam as part of Operation Keystone Robin. The 7th Marines departed Vietnam on 1 October 1970.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373377



From the South China Sea on the east, the 1st Marines' TAOR stretched westward to Hill 52. The regiment also now had responsibility for An Hoa, having taken operational control of the elements of the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines remaining there.[36]

The 5th Marines took the better part of a month to extricate itself from its old TAOR and move all its elements into positions around LZ Baldy and FSB Ross. Between 18 and 20 September, the regimental headquarters displaced from Hill 37 and Division Ridge to Baldy. There, on the 20th, the regimental commander, Colonel Judge, and his staff assumed control of the units operating in the 7th Marines' TAOR, which now became the 5th Marines' TAOR. These units included the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 7th Marines. Using companies from these battalions, the 5th Marines continued Operation Imperial Lake. During the rest of September, all of the 5th Marines' 3d Battalion and about half of the 2d Battalion redeployed a company or two at a time by helicopter into the 7th Marines' TAOR. This operation was complicated by frequent exchanges of control of companies between regiments and battalions. On 18 September, for example, Company K of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines turned over its positions on Hill 52 to Company C, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines. Company K then moved to Baldy where on the 20th it was placed under the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines for Operation Imperial Lake South. Two days later, it returned to the control of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines. Two other companies of the 3d Battalion were attached temporarily to the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 1st Marines to reinforce the Rocket Belt against a threatened enemy offensive; they finally rejoined their parent battalion on 28 September. Throughout the month, a forward command post and the better part of two companies of the 2d Battalion remained at An Hoa under control of the 1st Marines.[37]

By 30 September, the 5th Marines had all elements of its 2d and 3d Battalions but those at An Hoa, ready for operations in its new TAOR. The 3d Battalion, its CP at FSB Ross, deployed its companies in the Que Son Valley; the 2d Battalion, its headquarters at Baldy, operated in the eastern part of the regiment's sector. By 30 September, also, the artillery battalion assigned to direct support of the regiment, the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, had placed its batteries at Baldy, Ross, and Ryder, relieving the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, which had stood down for redeployment.[38]

Throughout these readjustments, the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines continued to perform its mission as division reserve. It protected the installations on Division Ridge and conducted Pacifier operations. On 25 September, the battalion extended its TAOR northward to the Cu De River between the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, and the sea. This placed the battalion in charge of coordinating the defense of all the units and cantonments in what had been the Northern and Southern Sector Defense Commands. Deploying one platoon into the extension of its area of operations, the battalion also kept up Pacifier operations until October.[39]

The 7th Marines meanwhile gradually withdrew its units from combat and prepared to leave Vietnam. The regiment's 1st Battalion had started redeploying on 6 September. On the 23d, reduced to cadre strength, the battalion left Da Nang for Camp Pendleton. The regimental headquarters and Headquarters Company ceased operations and displaced from LZ Baldy to Da Nang on 20 September, leaving the remaining two active battalions under control of the 5th Marines. Of these, the 3d Battalion began departure preparations on the 26th, followed on 2 October by the 2d Battalion.[40]

On 1 October, in a ceremony at the 1st Marine Division CP attended by Lieutenant General McCutcheon, Lieutenant General Sutherland of XXIV Corps, Lieutenant General Lam of I Corps, Major General Widdecke, and other high-ranking guests, III MAF officially bade farewell to the 7th Marines. Under a drizzling sky, Lieutenant General Lam bestowed Vietnamese decorations on Colonel Piehl and 18 other members of the regiment. The colors of the regiment, and its 2d and 3d Battalions, and those of the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines were paraded for the last time in Vietnam, and the 1st MAW band played "Auld Lang Syne." At 2000 that same day, the regimental command group boarded planes for the flight back to Camp Pendleton, and the Headquarters Company began loading equipment and supplies on ships at the port of Da Nang.[41]

The ceremony on 1 October ended a long war for the 7th Marines. The regiment had entered the conflict on 14 August 1965, landing at Chu Lai. Four days later, the 7th Marines acted as controlling headquarters for Operation Starlite, the first major American battle with main force Viet Cong, and its 1st and 3d Battalions participated in the fight. Since 1967, the regiment had operated around Da Nang, conducting large and small operations with distinction. From

spring 1969 until its departure from the country, the 7th Marines had scoured the Que Son Mountains and Valley and killed over 2,300 enemy.

It took another two weeks after the farewell ceremony for the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 7th Marines to actually leave Vietnam. In the same period, all the other remaining combat and support units scheduled for Keystone Robin Alpha also embarked for destinations in the United States and the Western Pacific. On 13 October, the amphibious cargo ship USS *Saint Louis* (LKA-116) pulled away from the dock at Da Nang carrying detachments of the 7th Marines; MAG-13; the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines; the 1st Motor Transport Battalion; and the 1st 175mm Gun Battery. Her sailing brought to an end the Marines' part of Keystone Robin Alpha. The redeployment had reduced III MAF's strength from 39,507 officers and men in July to 24,527 on 15 October.[42]

On 15 October, the last Marines finally moved out of An Hoa. Throughout September and into October, Marines of the 1st Engineer Battalion and helicopter support teams of Company C, 1st Shore Party Battalion had worked to dismantle the base, protected by elements of the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines. While the engineers rearranged the base with bulldozers, the helicopter support teams rigged the many watchtowers of An Hoa for helicopter relocation to other bases using CH-54 heavy lift helicopters and the Army's "Flying Cranes." Division headquarters viewed the slow progress of the job with increasing anxiety, as the heavy rains of the fall monsoon had begun. Any day, flood waters might make the single road and bridge out of An Hoa impassable for the heavy artillery and engineer equipment still there.

On 11 October, work had reached the point where division headquarters could finally issue withdrawal plans. The operation, coordinated by the 1st Marines, was to emphasize secretly scheduled and heavily guarded movement of the road convoys. The infantry would hold their positions covering Liberty Road and Bridge until the last Marine vehicle rolled onto the north bank of the Thu Bon. They would then turn protection of the bridge and road over to RFs and PFs of QDSZ and board helicopters for movement to LZ Baldy. Even then, five bulldozers, their engineer crews, and a rifle company, were to be left behind for final cleanup.[43]

Worsening weather cancelled plans for leaving Marines at An Hoa any longer. On 15 October, early in the morning, with Typhoon Joan approaching and heavy rains and flooding threatening, the division ordered immediate removal of all Marines and equipment from the base. Evacuation of the vehicles by road and the personnel by helicopter went forward through a stormy day in what the 1st Marines' report called "an orderly and expeditious manner." By 1900, An Hoa belonged entirely to the South Vietnamese.[44]

CHAPTER 6

The Fall-Winter Campaign in Quang Nam, October-December 1970

New Campaign Plans and Changes in Tactics—The Course of the Fall-Winter Campaign
Operation Imperial Lake Continues—5th Marines in the Lowlands: Noble Canyon and Tulare Falls I and II
1st Marines Operations, October-December 1970—The War in Quang Nam at the End of the Year

New Campaign Plans and Changes in Tactics

As Marine strength declined, allied staffs throughout Military Region 1 drafted their fall and winter campaign plans. With fewer allied troops available and with the monsoon rains sure to restrict air support of operations deep in the mountains, Americans and South Vietnamese alike prepared to commit their regular units alongside the Regional and Popular Forces in major pacification efforts in the lowlands. At the same time, III MAF modified its operating methods to get the most out of its remaining Marine air and ground forces.

On 8 September, XXIV Corps and MR 1 issued their Combined Fall-Winter Military Campaign Plan for 1970-71. The plan, which would guide operations from September 1970 through February 1971, assigned tasks to each component of the South Vietnamese Armed Forces (RVNAF) and allied forces in the military region. Mostly restating earlier directives, the plan called for a balance between offensive actions against base areas and protection of population centers, with an increased emphasis on efforts to eliminate the Viet Cong and their administrative apparatus at the village and hamlet level. The plan directed III MAF essentially to continue what it already was doing: to protect the Rocket Belt; to cooperate with the Government of Vietnam (GVN) in pacification activities; and to continue its drive against enemy bases in the Que Son Mountains.[1]

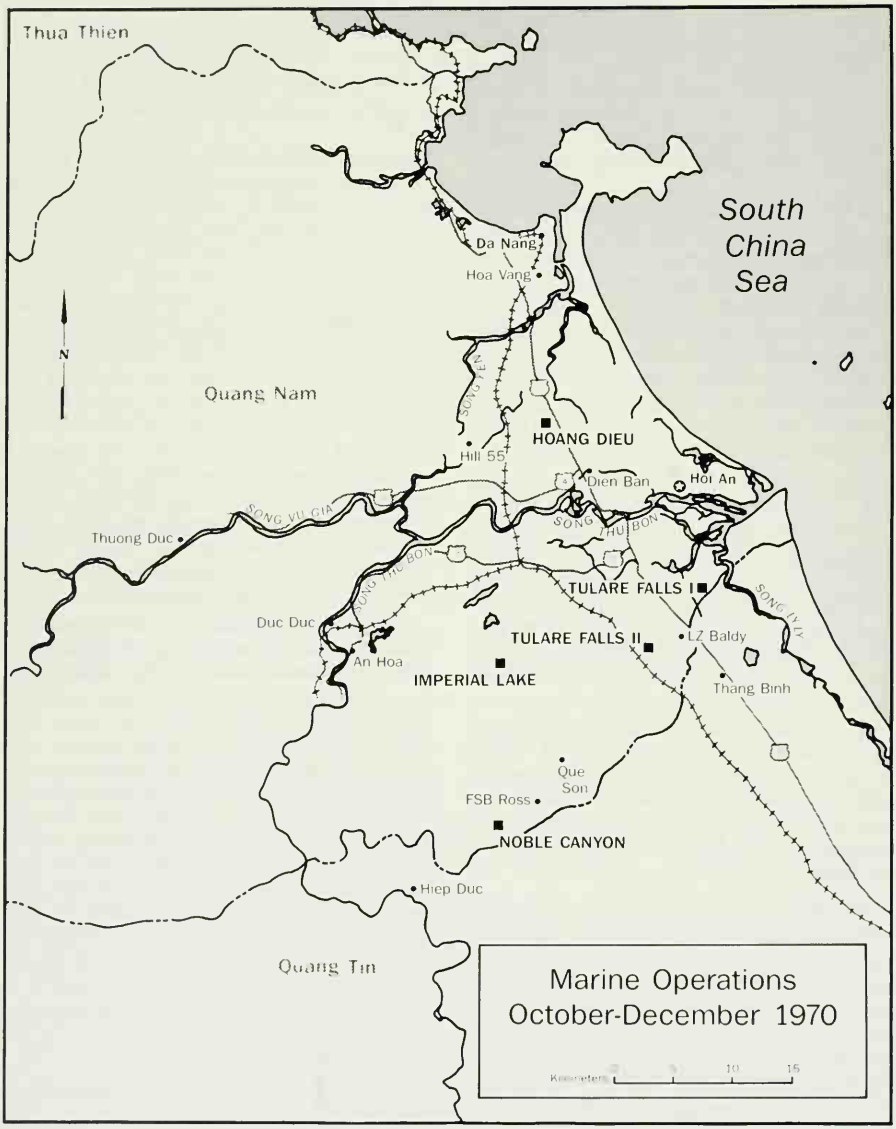
The XXIV Corps/MR 1 Combined Campaign Plan conformed closely to MACV guidelines. The MACV fall and winter campaign directive, which was formally issued on 21 September, instructed all U.S. forces to concentrate on small-unit action to protect pacified and semipacified areas. Units were to undertake large-scale offensives only when intelligence sources identified and located especially important targets.[2]

Lieutenant General Lam soon committed all the ARVN forces in Quang Nam to support pacification. On 22 October, he launched Operation Hoang Dieu. Conceived by Lam and named after a 19th Century Vietnamese national hero* who had been born in Quang Nam, the operation involved the 51st ARVN Regiment, the 1st Ranger Group, and the 2d and 3d Troops of the 17th Armored Cavalry Squadron. These Vietnamese regular units would cooperate with over 300 RF and PF platoons, the People's Self Defense Force (PSDF), and the national police in a province-wide combined offensive against Viet Cong who had infiltrated the populated areas. Lam assigned each military unit and each district in the province an area of operations to be covered by the troops under its command. In the case of the districts, which controlled the RFs and PFs, these areas usually were smaller in size than the territory encompassed within their political boundaries. Lam also arranged for III MAF to cover areas in the northern and western fringes of the populated region of Da Nang and in the Que Son Valley and for the Korean Marines to conduct saturation operations in two portions of their TAOR.

Within each command's zone of responsibility, troops would fill the countryside around the clock with small-unit patrols and ambushes. They would cooperate with police and local officials to cordon and search hamlets, concenttating on about 80 known VC-infested communities. In an attempt to restrict clandestine movement of Communist personnel and supplies, the allies would set up check points daily at a changing series of positions on major roads. They also planned to establish two combined holding and interrogation centers for persons detained by the roadblocks and by cordon and search operations, thus assuring rapid correlation and distribution of current information. Operation Hoang Dieu initially was planned to last 30 days. In fact, it continued through November and into the first days of December.[3]

By shifting his forces from search and destroy operations in the mountains to saturation of the populat-

*Hoang Dieu was born in 1828 in Phy Ky in Dien Ban District, Quang Nam. In 1882, during the French conquest of Indochina, he served as governor and minister of defense of Bac Ha City (later renamed Hanoi). When the French overran the city, Hoang Dieu hanged himself. 1st MarDiv FragO 62-70, dtd 19Oct70, in 1st MarDiv Jnl File, 20-31Oct70.


Thua Thien
South China Sea
Da Nang
Hoa Vang
N
Quang Nam
SONG VU GIA
HOANG DIEU
Hill 55
Dien Ban
Hoi An
SONG THU BON
Thuong Duc
SONG THU BON
TULARE FALLS I
SONG VU GIA
Duc Duc
TULARE FALLS II
LZ Baldy
An Hoa
IMPERIAL LAKE
Thang Binh
Que Son
FSB Ross
NOBLE CANYON
Hiep Duc
Quang Tin
Marine Operations
October-December 1970
Kilometers
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15

ed areas, Lieutenant General Lam was following a course of action long advocated by Lieutenant General McCutcheon and many other Marines. III MAF, therefore, welcomed Operation Hoang Dieu. Summing up the predominate opinion, Colonel Ralph F. Estey, G-3 of the 1st Marine Division, rejoiced that the South Vietnamese finally:

> . . . were actually getting out and doing the things they're supposed to do. I'm talking about population control and resource control . . . They've saturated the lowlands and the populated areas, and got the territorial forces and . . . the 51st ARVN Regiment actually operating in the lowlands instead of out there in the bush.[4]

On 19 October, the 1st Marine Division committed all of its forces to support Operation Hoang Dieu. This operation and the continuation and enlargement of Imperial Lake constituted the focus of Marine activity in Quang Nam for the rest of the year. The two remaining regiments of the 1st Marine Division more or less divided these responsibilities between them. The 1st Marines, cooperating closely with the Vietnamese units involved in Hoang Dieu, concentrated on small-unit action in the Rocket Belt and the Vu Gia River Valley and conducted search and destroy operations on Charlie Ridge. The 5th Marines, reinforced by elements of the 1st Marines, the 2d ROKMC Brigade, and the Americal Division, continued and expanded Operation Imperial Lake while defending the hamlets around Baldy and in the Que Son Valley.[5]

Both to assist the South Vietnamese in Operation Hoang Dieu and to improve general military effectiveness, the 1st Marine Division during October and November changed its methods for employing artillery, developed new helicopter-infantry reaction forces, and revamped the deployment of its reconnaissance teams. The division staff late in the summer had begun a review of the use of artillery. They especially questioned the value of the 4,000-5,000 rounds of harassing and interdiction fire* (H&I) delivered daily by the 11th Marines. Analyses showed that this fire, aimed at such targets as known or suspected rocket launching sites, infiltration routes, and troop concentration points, had little disruptive effect on the small-unit guerrilla operations which the enemy were now conducting. Therefore, the division began reducing the number of H&I missions. By late September, for example, the number of rounds expended for this purpose in the TAOR of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines had declined by 90 percent. The division instead used more ammunition in short, concentrated attacks on well-defined targets, as in the first day of Imperial Lake and in Catawba Falls.[6]

Marine Corps Historical Collection

Col Clark V. Judge, commanding officer of the 5th Marines, on LZ Baldy briefs 1st Marine Division staff officers on his regiment's quick reaction operations.

To avoid hitting friendly patrols in Operation Hoang Dieu, the division curtailed H&I still further. On 19 October, Major General Widdecke issued an order forbidding most artillery fire at targets within 500 meters of inhabited areas. Troops in actual contact, of course, could still call for fire against observed enemy within the 500-meter limit. In the heavily populated TAOR of the 1st Marines, this order stopped H&I fire in all but the foothills west and northwest of Da Nang. Elsewhere in Quang Nam its effects were less drastic but still evident. Ammunition expeditures by the 11th Marines dropped sharply. In October, the regiment fired 50,735 rounds in 3,420 missions. The following month, with the restriction order in effect, its batteries expended only 21,532 shells in 1,919 missions.[7]

The reduction had no noticeable adverse military effects. In fact, in the estimate of Marine commanders, it had positive benefits. These included reducing the chance of casualties to friendly troops and civilians from American fire and lowering the level of battle noise in the villages and hamlets. Lieutenant General McCutcheon attached special importance to the latter benefit, arguing that minimizing the sound of gunfire would give Vietnamese civilians a greater sense

*Harassing and interdiction fire in late 1970 was referred to by the euphemism "fire at pre-emptive/intelligence targets."

of security and perhaps increase their confidence in the GVN.[8]*

As it reduced the use of artillery, the division, in cooperation with the 1st MAW, increased and decentralized helicopter support of its infantry regiments. This development began with a proposal by Colonel Clark V. Judge, commander of the 5th Marines. Judge suggested to the division and the wing that his regiment's mobility and tactical flexibility would be much increased if the wing would station at LZ Baldy a helicopter force assigned exclusively to support the 5th Marines and to operate under control of the regimental commander. Both the division and the wing agreed to try out Judge's plan. Beginning on 14 October, the 1st MAW daily dispatched six CH-46Ds, four AH-1G gunships, one UH-1E command and control aircraft, and usually a CH-53 to Baldy. The wing also furnished an officer to serve as helicoprer commander (airborne). These helicopters were at Colonel Judge's disposal for trooplifts, supply runs, medical evacuations, and other support missions previously conducted from Marble Mountain. In consultation with the helicopter commander from the wing, Colonel Judge and his staff could plan and execute heliborne combat operations, often in rapid response to current intelligence. With an infantry platoon stationed at Baldy, the helicopter package constituted the 5th Marines' Quick Reaction Force (QRF), which was employed for much the same purposes as the old Pacifier, but, unlike Pacifier, it was controlled by the 5th Marines rather than by the division.[9]

The assignment to the 5th Marines of what amounted to its own miniature helicopter squadron proved satisfactory to both air and ground Marines. According to Major General Alan J. Armstrong, the 1st MAW commander:

> . . . The flexibility it gave the commander of the 5th Marines was marvelous. If he wanted to have a tactical operation, he could suspend the logistics runs and say, "Well, all right, we won't schedule any in the morning. We'll put all the birds on logistics in the afternoon and have . . . five CH-46s doing them and doing them in a hurry, and take the larger number of 46s available in the morning and run a tactical operation." And at other times they were there with a ready platoon for immediate reaction if they got a flash call. And so was the helicopter commander (airborne), right there, right outside the Three Section [operations]; and they planned everything together. And this got to be a very, very successful thing . . . .[10]

As the dedicated package system demonstrated its value, the 1st Marines on 22 November was given one UH-1E, three CH-46Ds, and three AH-1Gs, to be kept on call daily under regimental control at Marble Mountain. The 1st Marines then created its own QRF by stationing an infantry platoon at the regimental command post at Camp Perdue. As each regiment acquired its own airmobile reserve, the division discontinued its Pacifier force. The 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, while still acting as division reserve and protecting its TAOR of rear area installations, began sending two of its companies at a time in rotation to reinforce Operation Imperial Lake.[11]

The 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, which had been reduced to two letter companies and a subunit of the 1st Force Reconnaissance Company by the Keystone Bluejay and Keystone Robin Alpha redeployments, modified its operations to assure full employment of its men during the monsoon and to help the infantry regiments cover their enlarged TAORs. Early in October, the batralion began esrablishing platoon patrol bases within the regiments' TAORs. From each of these bases, which would be maintained in one place for several weeks and which could be reached by foot in bad weather, reconnaissance teams would fan out to patrol assigned areas. By the end of October, the battalion had conducted five patrol base operations, two on Charlie Ridge, two in the Que Sons, and one in the Cu De River Valley.*[12]

The next logical step soon came: combination of the reconnaissance teams with the regimental QRFs in a new system for rapid exploitation of sudden contacts. On 18 October, the division ordered the 5th Marines to implement a new plan of operations for Imperial Lake. Under the new plan, continuous infantry patrols in the Que Sons would be supplemented by 6-10 reconnaissance teams working out of one or more patrol bases. The six-man teams, their activities closely coordinated with those of the infantry, would seek out base camps and enemy troops. If a team found a site worth intensive search or became involved in a larger fight than it could handle, the regimental commander could send in the QRF to assist in the

*Not all Marines in the field agreed that H&I fires were unproductive. For example, Major John S. Grinalds, S-3 of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines during the last half of 1970, reported that intercepted enemy radio messages and other sources indicated H&I fire was taking a toll of guerrillas and VCI. Maj John S. Grinalds intvw, 8May71, pp. 115-116 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).

*For further detail on 1st Reconnaissance Battalion operations during 1970-1971, see Chapter 17.

Marine Corps Historical Collection

Marines of a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) from the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines scramble aboard a waiting helicopter. About 30 North Vietnamese troops have been spotted in the open from LZ Baldy. The QRF was a tactic to exploit fast-breaking intelligence.

search or exploit the contact. With this concept, Marine commanders hoped to combine the stealth of movement of the reconnaissance team with the greater firepower of the conventional rifle platoon. The plan was expected to enable the Marines to engage and destroy small enemy groups that usually evaded infantry sweeps and to overrun base camps before the NVA or VC could strip them of valuable equipment and documents.[13]*

*The 7th Marines had considered a similar scheme of operations in August. At that time, reconnaissance teams in the Que Sons were encountering enemy units of platoon or larger size and often had to be extracted hastily under fire. Colonel Derning and his staff worked out a plan for exploiting this Communist aggressiveness against the reconnaissance teams. They wanted to insert an infantry platoon in the same helicopters that carried the reconnaissance Marines. The platoon, its arrival concealed from the Communists, could set up ambushes into which the reconniassance teams would lead pursuers. This plan was never carried out. Col Edmund G. Derning, Jr., debriefing at FMFPac, 10Aug70, Tape 4958 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).

After the QRF-reconnaissance combination proved effective in Imperial Lake and after both regiments had employed QRFs, on 8 December the division issued an order further refining the procedure. Under the revised system, the location of reconnaissance platoon patrol bases in the regiments' TAORs would be determined by the regimental commanders in consultation with the commander of the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion and would be subject to review by the division. A rifle platoon from the host infantry regiment would protect each patrol base while the reconnaissance teams operated around it. When a team made a potentially significant sighting or contact, the regimental commander was to consider deployment of the QRF. The QRF could land at the team's location and act with the team; it could land near the team and maneuver in cooperation with it; it could go in after the team was extracted; or it could be inserted in the same helicopters that took out the team in hopes of luring the enemy into an ambush. The QRF

could also operate independent of the reconnaissance teams.

The order directed both the 1st and 5th Marines to keep one rifle company on QRF duty with one platoon on 15-minute alert and the rest of the company on one-hour alert. In addition, the division reserve battalion, the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, was also to establish a QRF company. Each QRF would have its own helicopter package, that for the 1st Marines based at Hill 37, and that for the 5th Marines remaining at Baldy. Helicopters for the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines QRF would stand by at Marble Mountain when ordered by the division. The division delegated full authority to the regimental commanders to conduct QRF operations within their TAORs, while the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines QRF would be controlled directly by the division and could be employed anywhere in the division's TAOR. In close cooperation with the regiments, the 1st Reconniassance Battalion would make the final decisions on insertion and extraction of its reconnaissance teams and on the conduct of their missions.[14]

The Course of the Fall-Winter Campaign

The intensified clearing effort in the hamlets and the continuing sweeps in the Que Sons went forward against slackening enemy resistance. The NVA and VC had avoided major engagements with allied troops throughout the year, but during the last four months of 1970 even low-level harassing activity declined in frequency. In September, for instance, the 1st Marine Division reported 133 enemy initiated contacts in its TAOR, mostly sniper fire and small ground probes. During October, only 84 such contacts occurred, and in November only 79 incidents were reported. As the worst of the monsoon weather ended in December, the Communists increased their effort to 165 attacks, but these continued to be small in scale and usually ineffective.

Mortar and rocket attacks followed a similar pattern. In September, the NVA and VC fired 125 mortar rounds and 19 rockets at allied installations. In October, they fired 145 mortar rounds and maintained their rate of rocket fire at 18. In November, their fire dropped off sharply, to only 25 mortar rounds and seven rockets, and during December they managed to fire only 41 mortar rounds and seven rockets.[15]

Much of the reduction in enemy activity resulted from unusually severe monsoon rains and floods. Throughout October, intermittent heavy rains fell in Quang Nam, and four tropical storms hit the province: Typhoon Iris on the 4th; Typhoon Joan on the 15th; and Tropical Storms Kate on the 25th and Louise on the 29th. The last two storms brought more than 17

Vietnamese villagers pick their way through flood waters caused by Tropical Storm Kate in October 1970. The unusually severe deluge temporarily brought the war to a standstill in Quang Nam Province during the month. These were the worst floods since 1964.

Marine Corps Historical Collection

Marine Corps Historical Collection

An aerial view shows the Ba Ren Bridge under water as a result of the October flash floods caused by more than 17 inches of rain falling in less than eight days. As can be seen in the picture, the rushing waters isolated thousands of villagers in Quang Nam.

inches of rain within eight days. The deluge overwhelmed the natural drainage system of the Quang Nam lowlands. On the 29th, as rivers and streams burst their banks, flash floods inundated most of the area extending from about a mile south of Da Nang to Baldy and from Hoi An on the coast west to Thuong Duc. The floods, the worst in Quang Nam since 1964, transformed most of the populated area into a vast shallow lake broken by islands of high ground. Over 200 people, most of them civilians, drowned; over 240,000 temporarily or permanently lost their homes; 55 percent of the season's rice crop was ruined.[16]

The floods all but halted allied military activity in the lowlands just as Operation Hoang Dieu was be-

ginning. Many units had to evacuate their TAORs to escape the tising watet. The 2d Battalion, 1st Marines for example, with most of its opetating area under several feet of water, had to extract most of its patrols from the field by helicopter and collect them at Hill 55 and the battalion CP at Camp Lauer just south of Marble Mountain. In the 5th Marines' AO, over 350 Marines of the 2d CAG, numetous CUPP units, advisory teams, and RFs and PFs, and the Headquattets Company of the 2d Battalion, 2d ROKMC Brigade used LZ Baldy as a tempotary tefuge. Advance warning of the apptoaching storms and catefully planned disaster-control procedures kept III MAF's storm losses in men and material to a minimum, but casualties occurred. Both the 1st and 2d Battalions, 1st Marines lost men swept away by rushing watet as patrols caught in the field by the flood ttied to ctoss swollen streams.[17]

The tapidly rising waters threatened the lives of thousands of Vietnamese civilians, and air and ground units of III MAF cooperated with the U.S. Army and ARVN forces in a large-scale tescue effort. Disastercontrol sections were established at III MAF and 1st Marine Division, and General McCutcheon called on the wing to support the evacuation. Colonel Rex C. Denny, Jr., who was awaiting assignment as Wing G-3, was in the G-3 bunker when Genetal McCutcheon arrived to discuss the evacuation of thousands of stranded Vietnamese. "A rathet heated discussion ensued with the Wing and MAG-16 reps concerned with weather conditions and, of more importance," said Denny, "was the lack of control of the evacuees—they stated they would be hauling VC as well as legitimate citizens." According to Denny, General McCutcheon listened patiently, then responsed, "As of now the war is over, let's get on with the evacuation."[18]

The helicopter pilots and crews of MAG-16 especially distinguished themselves. Between 29 and 31 October, they braved darkness, high winds, driving rain, and 500-foot cloud ceilings to fly 366 hours and 1,120 sorties on tescue missions. In the wotds of the 1st Marines' Command Chtonology, "exttaotdinary feats of heroism and airmanship were commonplace."[19] Assisted by Marine and Vietnamese ground troops, the Marines of MAG-16 rescued ovet 11,000 persons and later delivered a total of 56.3 tons of food, clothing, and emergency supplies to thousands more. In addition to the wing, the 1st Motor Transport Battalion was instrumental in rescuing the Vietnamese from a dire situation. In desperate need of resupply for his pacification program, Colonel John W. Chism, USA, the Senior Province Advisor, whose headquattets was in Hoi An, appealed to the 1st Marine Division for 30 trucks to move supplies. "Within fifteen minutes after making our needs known to General Widdecke, . . . [the division] had the first convoy tolling. A convoy which grew to 90 trucks and lasted three days. This action saved the entire program."[20] As the flood watets receded, Marine engineers began repairing roads and bridges, and the GVN with extensive American assistance, began the resettlement and reconstruction effort.[20]

By 1-2 November, the floods had begun to subside, although rain, fog, and swollen streams hampered militaty operations for the rest of the month. As the civilians began returning to what was left of their homes, allied troops quickly moved back into the field and resumed the hunt for the enemy. The Americans and South Vietnamese soon discovered that the floods had hurt the Communists, too. The water had covered innumetable caches of food and supplies. With many infiltration routes blocked, other material had piled up in the Que Sons where it soon fell into the hands of Marine patrols on Operation Imperial Lake. Groups of enemy soldiers, their usual hiding places inundated, were caught in the open by allied troops and killed or captured in sharp fighting. In Dien Ban District alone, the ARVN claimed 141 VC and NVA killed and 63 captured between 2 and 5 November. These bands of displaced enemy would also furnish profitable targets for the new regimental quick reaction forces.[22]

Hoping to capitalize on the natural disaster the enemy had suffered, the allies pushed ahead during November with Operation Hoang Dieu in the lowlands and continued Operation Imperial Lake in the Que Sons. Opetation Hoang Dieu ended on 2 December. The South Vietnamese forces reported killing over 500 enemy and taking almost 400 prisoners. Lieutenant Genetal McCutcheon declared the operation an "unqualified success" in denying the Communists access to food and the people, and he urged Lieutenant General Lam to continue saturation operations.[23]

Lam did so. On 17 December, he initiated Operation Hoang Dieu 101, a second province-wide saturation campaign.* As in Operation Hoang Dieu, the Vietnamese regulars and RFs and PFs concentrated their forces in the lowlands. They patrolled and am-

*The operation had actually begun on 24 November by a few ARVN units south of Hoi An, and Lam's order of 17 December enlarged it to the whole province.

bushed around the hamlets, conducted cordon and search operations of known VC hideouts, and established roadblocks. In support of the operation, the Marines continued to restrict artillery fire in the populated areas and did most of their patrolling in the hills west of Da Nang and in the Que Sons. This pattern of operations continued through December.[24]

Operation Imperial Lake Continues

From the completion of Keystone Robin Alpha through the end of the year, the 1st Marine Division continued and expanded Operation Imperial Lake. Using the Quick Reaction Force and reconnaissance patrol bases, the division refined and improved its tactics for scouring the mountains. The division steadily increased the number of Marines committed to the operation, and its forces were supplemented by contingents of Korean Marines and U.S. Army troops. By the end of the year, Imperial Lake had produced no major engagements with enemy units, but it had uncovered large amounts of food and equipment, had led to the destruction of numerous base camps, and had yielded much information on Communist operating methods, personnel, and order of battle.

In late September, when the 5th Marines took control of the units in Imperial Lake, the forces operating in the Que Sons had dwindled to two companies of the 7th Marines, one operating around LZ Vulture (Hill 845) and the other in the southern foothills four or five miles north of FSB Ross. On 2 October, Lieutenant Colonel Herschel L. Johnson, Jr.'s 3d Battalion, 5th Marines relieved the remaining 7th Marine units. Company M of Johnson's battalion occupied LZ Vulture and began patrolling around it while Company L launched operations in the southern Que Sons. These companies worked in the mountains until 20 October. From 13-15 October, they were reinforced by a forward command post and Companies A and C of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines. In one of the last Pacifier operations there, 1st Battalion companies, reacting to current intelligence, searched an area about three and one-half miles south of Vulture. As 7th Marine units had before them, the companies found many small caches of arms, food, and clothing and killed a few North Vietnamese and Viet Cong in brief firefights.[25]

On 18 October, beginning implementation of the division's new QRF-reconnaissance concept of operations, Lieutenant Colonel William G. Leftwich, Jr.'s 1st Reconnaissance Battalion established a patrol base at LZ Vulture, which was now renamed LZ Rainbow. From this base and later from another at LZ Ranchhouse one and one-half miles east of Rainbow, 8-10 reconnaissance teams continually operated in the mountains. To ensure rapid response to their reports, Leftwich stationed a liaison officer and a communications team at the 5th Marines' combat operations center.[26]

The 5th Marines on 18 October issued orders directing a new battalion to take over Imperial Lake and organize a quick reaction force. The regiment instructed Lieutenant Colonel Thomas M. Hamlin, commanding the 2d Battalion, to deploy one of his companies to LZ Rainbow to relieve Company M of the 3d Battalion. Another company of the 2d Battalion would constitute the Quick Reaction Force, based at LZ Baldy. Lieutenant Colonel Hamlin's battalion headquarters would remain at Baldy but be prepared to establish a forward command post in the Que Sons if operations expanded to multi-company size. The 3d Battalion, relieved of responsibility for Imperial Lake, would continue patrolling the southern foothills of the Que Sons, defend FSBs Ross and Ryder, and provide one rifle company as regimental reserve for use in emergencies anywhere in the 5th Marines' TAOR.[27]

The relief of the 3d Battalion by the 2d Battalion in Imperial Lake took place on 21 October. Company F of Hamlin's battalion occupied LZ Rainbow and patrolled around it while Company H acted as the Quick Reaction Force. Two companies and a mobile CP of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines moved to LZ Baldy to join the operation, but diversion of their escorting gunships to another mission prevented their insertion in the Que Sons on the 19th, and Tropical Storm Kate prevented it on the 27th. The 1st Battalion elements remained at Baldy and finally entered the mountains in November.

The QRF-reconnaissance combination soon produced results. On 21 October, the 3d Platoon of Company H was inserted four miles southeast of Rainbow in reaction to a reconnaissance team's sighting of four enemy. The platoon found over 1,000 pounds of rice buried in urns covered with dead leaves. The following day, in two separate actions, two QRF platoons of Company H killed four North Vietnamese, captured one rifle and 700 pounds of rice, and discovered a bunker complex.[28]

Late in October, the tropical storms which swept Quang Nam sharply restricted activity in Imperial Lake, although they did not force a complete halt to operations. Marines caught in the hills by the storms,

while safe from floods, endured miseries of their own as they huddled under wet ponchos in muddy holes and vainly attempted to ward off wind and rain. The weather and the need for helicopters for rescue work temporarily prevented aerial resupply of Companies F and H of the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines. These companies tightened their belts and lived on short rations or none at all as they combed the ridges and ravines.[29]

Significant discoveries and contacts occurred during the stormy last days of the month. On 26 October, for example, the 2d Platoon of Company H, which had been inserted as a QRF just south of Rainbow before the arrival of Tropical Storm Kate, found an enemy communication wire strung along a trail. Weather-beaten and hungry after three wet, chilly days in the hills, the Marines followed the wire into a deserted battalion-size base camp. The platoon spent three days searching the holes and caves of the enemy haven, which yielded a substantial cache of arms, ammunition, and boobytrap material.[30]

Also on the 26th, two reconnaissance teams, Cayenne and Prime Cut,* combined in a surprise attack on 10-15 NVA in a small camp north of FSB Rainbow. The reconnaissance Marines killed five enemy while suffering no losses of their own, and they captured an AK-47 rifle, a Chinese Communist-made radio, and a small amount of other equipment. The next day, to the west of the firebase, a squad from Company F attacked another small camp, killed six NVA in the first burst of fire, then came under attack by an estimated 10 more. Reinforced by a second squad, the

*Each reconnaissance team had a codename which also served as its radio call sign.

Maj James T. Sehulster, the operations officer of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines enjoys an improvised meal of C-rations on Hill 381 in the Que Son Mountains during the Christmas season. A Christmas wreath can be seen in the foreground outside the battalion CP.

Marine Corps Historical Collection

Marines, who lost one man killed and three wounded in the fight, called in artillery and air strikes. The enemy fled. On 30 October, another squad from Company F killed three more enemy in the same area. By the end of October, the 5th Marines could claim 74 NVA and VC dead in Imperial Lake and 34 weapons captured.[31]

While the rifle companies searched the mountains, the 1st Marine Division and 5th Marines intelligence staffs during October sought ways to more quickly and thoroughly exploit information discovered in or useful to Imperial Lake. During the month, division G-2 personnel began holding daily meetings with the 5th Marines' S-2 staff to exchange information. The regimental staff used every expedient to increase the amount of intelligence collected in the field. For example, units operating in Imperial Lake received orders to send photographs and, when possible, the actual corpses of all enemy dead back to Baldy by helicopter. At Baldy, enemy POWs and defectors would try to identify the slain NVA and VC. Major Jon A. Stuebe, the 5th Marines' S-2, claimed to have discovered by this means the names or ranks of 80 percent of the VC and NVA killed during October in Imperial Lake.[32]

During November, the 5th Marines committed still more troops to Imperial Lake. The 2d Battalion, which directed operations in the mountains throughout the month, on 6 November established a forward command post on Hill 381, two and one-half miles south of Rainbow. From there the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Hamlin, controlled three of his own companies and two from the 3d Battalion, which rotated its companies between Imperial Lake and other assignments, as they searched the central and western Que Sons. A 2d Battalion rear CP remained at Baldy to direct base defense and logistic support and to conduct QRF operations. The 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, by 1 November, had inserted a forward CP and two companies in the northern Que Sons, where they continued operations for the rest of the month. The 1st Reconnaissance Battalion had 5-10 teams in the mountains at all times. On 26 November, the reconnaissance Marines moved their patrol base from LZ Ranch House to Hill 510 deep in the western Que Sons.

The reconnaissance teams shifted westward in part to make way for units of the 2d Republic of Korea Marine Brigade. The Korean Marines joined Operation Imperial Lake on 19 November. On that date, a newly formed ROKMC reconnaissance unit, trained by the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion and ANGLICO Sub-Unit One and accompanied by advisers from those units, established a patrol base on Hill 322 in the northeastern Que Sons. To exploit their sightings, the Koreans stationed a quick reaction infantry platoon at Baldy. Later in the month, two Korean Marine infantry companies, the 6th and 7th of the 2d Battalion, began patrolling in the northeastern Que Sons. The Korean Marines would remain committed to Imperial Lake for the rest of the year.[33]

All the units in Imperial Lake kept up the pattern of small-unit patrolling and thorough searching of any area where it was suspected enemy camps or supply caches were concealed. Operations increased the toll of NVA and VC dead in ambushes and brief firefights, and resulted in the capture of over 50,000 pounds of rice. A patrol from Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines made the most important discovery of the month. On 5 November, while searching a base camp, the patrol found a cache of documents, photographs, and tape recordings. The material when examined turned out to be the central files of the Viet Cong security section for Quang Nam Province. The file was full of names of enemy underground leaders and agents. Other base camps and cave complexes yielded weapons, radios, communication equipment, and explosives. As the Marines uncovered bunkers and tunnels, they blew up the structures with plastic explosive and seeded caves with crystallized CS riot gas. If the enemy reoccupied a seeded cave, the heat from their bodies and from lamps or cooking fires would cause the CS to resume its gaseous state, and render the cave uninhabitable.*[34]

The North Vietnamese and Viet Cong continued to avoid combat except when small groups were

*Lieutenant General Bernard E. Trainor, who as a lieutenant colonel commanded the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, remarked in 1985 that Company B did not just happen by chance on the enemy headquarters complex. As a result of a successful Pacifier operation in late September, the Marines captured the chief of *Da Nang-Que Son Communications Liaison Network, Espionage Section, Quang Da Special Zone*. After extensive questioning the prisoner finally agreed to lead the Marines to the enemy headquarters complex. Based on this and other intelligence, the Marine battalion in late October and early November launched an operation in an "almost inaccessible portion of the central Que Son Mountains." A VC company, the *C-111*, attempted unsuccessfully to draw off the Marines from the headquarters complex. As described in the text, Company B "captured intact the central files of the *VC Quang Da Special Zone*." According to General Trainor, "The captured files were described by the intelligence community, both military and CIA, as the most significant find of the war in I Corps." LtGen Bernard E. Trainor, Comments on draft ms, 1Dec85 (Vietnam Comment File).

brought to bay by Marine patrols. Only sporadically and on a limited scale did they strike back at the units in Imperial Lake. On 8-9 November, for instance, an estimated 10 NVA or VC probed the defenses of LZ Rainbow, but fell back before the Marines' fire. During the night of the 28th, the enemy struck harder. They fired rockets and grenades into the command posts of Company F of the 2d Battalion and Company K of the 3d Battalion, killing one Marine and wounding nine. On the 30th, in an exchange of small arms fire during a Marine search of a base camp, the Communists killed 1st Lieutenant James D. Jones, commander of Company I, 3d Battalion.[35]

A helicopter accident cost the Marines more lives than did this occasional harassment. During the afternoon of 18 November, reconnaissance team Rush Act, on patrol from LZ Ranch House, had a man severely injured in a fall down a cliff and called for an emergency extraction. The call reached the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion CP at Camp Reasoner on Division Ridge just as a CH-46D from HMM-263 piloted by First Lieutenant Orville C. Rogers, Jr., landed on the pad after completing another mission. The helicopter was carrying the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel William G. Leftwich, Jr., and six other Marines. Lieutenant Colonel Leftwich, a 39-year-old honor graduate of the Naval Academy and holder of the Navy Cross, had come to the battalion in September from command of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines. He often flew on missions to extract his patrols when they ran into trouble, and this day he decided to pick up Rush Act in his own helicopter. As one of his officers later said, "There was no regulation which said he had to go, but he always went."*[36]

It was a difficult and dangerous mission. Clouds and fog hung low over the Que Sons. With no clear space near the patrol for a landing, the helicopter would have to pick the team out of the jungle with an emergency extraction rig, a 120-foot nylon rope to which the men could hook themselves with harnesses that they wore. In spite of the weather and the rough terrain, the helicopter found and extracted the team. With the seven Marines of Rush Act dangling from the extraction rig, the helicopter climbed back into the clouds to return to base. Instead, it smashed into a mountainside about two miles southeast of FSB Rainbow. The next day, two reconnaissance teams worked their way through jungle and thick brush to the crash site. They found all 15 Marines dead amid the strewn wreckage. The tragedy was the worst helicopter crash in I Corps since 26 August, when an Army aircraft had been shot down, killing 31 soldiers. It had cost III MAF one of its best liked and most highly respected battalion commanders.[37]*

The tragic crash also necessitated a change of commanders. Lieutenant Colonel Bernard E. Trainor, who had experience as a reconnaissance company commander, was moved from command of 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, to command of 1st Reconnaissance Battalion. Lieutenant Colonel Franklin A. Hart, Jr., who had commanded the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines in the Que Son area of operations earlier in the fall, was transferred from the division plans section to command the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines. As Lieutenant Colonel Hart would later observe, making these changes put experienced officers into the vacated command billets and enabled the division "to continue Operation Imperial Lake with the least disruption of operation."[38]

Imperial Lake continued into December with elements of all three of the 5th Marines' battalions; companies of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines; and troops of the Americal Division taking part. On 2 December, a forward command group of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines replaced that of the 2d Battalion on Hill 381. Initially this command group controlled the operations of two of its own companies and three from the

*Colonel Albert C. Smith, Jr., was present at the briefing when Lieutenant Colonel Leftwich was given a verbal order by the division commander, General Widdecke, to accompany emergency extracts "to prevent mismangement faults by Recon and 1st MAW inexperienced personnel." Col Albert C. Smith, Jr., Comments on draft ms, 1May83 (Vietnam Comment File).

*A native of Memphis, Tennessee, Leftwich graduated from the Naval Academy in 1953, having held the rank of brigade captain of midshipmen. He served his first Vietnam tour in 1965-1966 as advisor to Task Force Alpha of the VNMC. He earned the Navy Cross for heroism during operations with the Vietnamese Marines in the Central Highlands. Fluent in the Vietnamese language, he had made himself an expert on pacification and the role of the American advisor. From Vietnam, he went to assignments with the Marine Corps Schools and HQMC and from March 1968 to May 1970 was Marine Corps Aide and Special Assistant to Undersecretary of the Navy John W. Warner. In June 1970 he returned to Vietnam to command the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines and in September took over the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion. Respected by fellow Marines for courage and professional skill, he was believed by many to be destined for the highest military ranks. The *Spruance* class destroyer USS *Leftwich* (DD 984), named in Lieutenant Colonel Leftwich's honor, was commissioned on 25 August 1979. For a list of his writings on Vietnam, see Hist&MusDiv, HQMC, *The Marines in Vietnam, 1954-1973: An Anthology and Annotated Bibliography* (Washington, 1974), pp. 264-265.

Marine Corps Historical Collection

A Marine firing party from the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion fires a salute at the funeral service of LtCol William G. Leftwich, Jr. LtCol Leftwich commanded the battalion when he was killed together with 14 other Marines in a helicopter crash on 18 November 1970.

2d Battalion, but rotations during the month reduced the number of companies under its control to two. From 2-20 December, the 2d Battalion, its headquarters located at LZ Baldy, directed operations in the lowlands and maintained the regimental QRF. On the 20th, a 2d Battalion forward command group with two companies returned to Imperial Lake. Deployed by helicopter, the command group took station at the reconnaissance patrol base on Hill 510, and the companies moved out to search the western Que Sons. The 1st Battalion, 5th Marines continued operations in the northern Que Sons throughout the month, rotating companies to keep two in the mountains while the other two protected the division rear. Reconnaissance teams kept up their saturation patrolling, and on 18 December the 5th Marines implemented the division's orders which refined and elaborated upon the system for using the QRF to support them. The Korean Marines continued working in the northeastern Que Sons.

On 16 December, a mobile battalion command post and Companies G and H of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines landed from helicopters northwest of Hill 510 to join Imperial Lake. Until the 23d, they patrolled and searched, making no major discoveries or contacts. Then they returned to their TAOR south of Da Nang.

Elements of the Americal Division also entered Imperial Lake. On 2-3 December, the 1st Marine Division granted the Americal an extension of its TAOR northward into Antenna Valley and the southern Que Sons. Americal Division companies operated in those areas throughout the month to seal off the infiltration routes between the Que Sons and the enemy bases farther to the south and west.[39]

The pattern of operations in Imperial Lake continued unchanged in December. Usually as squad and platoon patrols, the Marines searched the mountains and occasionally ambushed or collided with groups of 5-10 enemy. The Communists continued to evade

rather than resist. As Colonel Ralph F. Estey, the division G-3 put it, "In the mountains we're finding the enemy is not standing to fight. He's running away; he's leaving weapons and other . . . things in the caves."[40] The toll of enemy dead, captured weapons and equipment, and destroyed base camps continued to mount.

On 24 December, Company L of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines stumbled upon a major NVA or VC command post. At 1515 on the 24th, a squad from Company L, returning to base after a patrol, saw nine enemy—eight men and a woman—sitting in front of a cave about one and one-half miles southwest of the battalion CP on Hill 381. The patrol cut down three or four of the enemy with small arms fire, but the survivors, aided by others from inside the cave, dragged away the bodies and disappeared into the brush. Sweeping the area of the contact, the Marines quickly realized they had an important cave complex. Elements of Companies K and L came in to help in the search, which continued into the afternoon of Christmas day.

The Marines discovered six large caves, two of the biggest floored with bamboo. Besides a scattering of weapons, ordnance, food, and medical supplies, they collected over 100 pounds of North Vietnamese uniforms, about 10 pounds of documents, and 8 wallets containing letters and pictures. Most important in indicating the function of the complex, they found three Chinese Communist-made radios, three portable generators, headsets, telegraph keys, and quantities of spare tubes and transistors. The radios could be attached to cunningly constructed and concealed cable antennas which ran from the caves to ground level and then were threaded inside or wrapped around tree trunks. From the quantity and type of equipment found and from the layout of the caves, one of which appeared to have been a combat operations center, some allied intelligence officers believed that at last they had found the elusive *Front 4* forward CP.[41]

While the burden of effort in Imperial Lake fell on the infantry and the reconnaissance teams, Marine aviation and artillery also helped keep pressure on the NVA and VC. Jets of the 1st MAW flew 137 sorties in support of troops in Imperial Lake in October, 108 in November, and 54 in December, dropping hundreds of tons of bombs and napalm. Helicopters of MAG-16 launched 3,000-4,000 sorties per month, mostly carrying troops and cargo and evacuating wounded. By November, Marines in the Que Sons could call for fire support from 44 light, medium, and heavy artillery pieces, most of them controlled by the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, in batteries at Ross, Baldy, and FSB Ryder. In December alone, the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines directed 87 fire missions on observed targets using 1,794 rounds. The battalion also called for 76 missions, expending 968 rounds, on intelligence and preemptive targets.[42]

Imperial Lake continued into the new year. Between 1 September and 31 December, the operation had cost the 1st Marine Division 20 Marines and 2 Navy corpsmen killed and 156 Marines and 2 personnel wounded. Enemy losses amounted to 196 NVA and VC dead and 106 prisoners and suspects detained. Captured materiel included 159 individual and 11 crew-served weapons and tons of other ordnance, food, and equipment. In addition, the Marines had wrecked innumerable enemy camps and installations.[43] Even more damaging to the Communists was the continuous denial to them of safe use of their long established mountain haven. As Colonel Estey summed up on 14 December:

> Our presence there now is certainly keeping him [the enemy] off . . . balance, and he doesn't have a sanctuary in the Que Son Mountains that he enjoyed . . . before. I know we've conducted operations in the Que Son Mountains . . . , but we've never actually maintained a presence there, and this is what we're doing now . . . .[44]

5th Marines in the Lowlands: Noble Canyon and Tulare Falls I and II

While the 5th Marines kept most of its companies in the Que Sons during the Fall-Winter Campaign, it still had to protect populated areas around LZ Baldy and in the Que Son Valley. The regiment employed elements of its 2d and 3d Battalions for this purpose, and it relied heavily on South Vietnamese RFs and PFs and units from the Americal Division to supplement its own thinly spread manpower.

In the area north and west of Baldy, Company G, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines conducted most of the defensive operations. Squads from this Combined Unit Pacification Program (CUPP) company, integrated with Regional and Popular Force platoons, patrolled and ambushed in nine AOs along Routes 1 and 535. With their Vietnamese allies, the CUPP Marines had numerous small contacts and carried out occasional company sweeps and cordon and search operations.

Other 2d Battalion companies also operated around Baldy when they could be spared from Imperial Lake

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A 373814

Marines from Company L, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines move off Landing Zone Ross into the Que Son Valley to begin Operation Noble Canyon on 23 October 1970. Bad weather continued to hamper the operation and forced cancellation of a planned helicopter lift.

and from QRF duty. From 26-31 October, for example, Company E patrolled just south of Baldy, killing four Communists. In December, with all of the battalion's organic companies under operational control of other units (Company G, as a CUPP unit, was under regimental control), Company G of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines reinforced the defense of Baldy. The company captured 400 pounds of rice, took five prisoners, and killed three VC while under the operational control of the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines. On 17 December, Company G moved to the Que Sons to join another company and a command group from its parent battalion, now also temporarily under control of the 5th Marines, in Operation Imperial Lake.[45]

The 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, with its CP at FSB Ross, rotated its companies between Imperial Lake and various other missions. During most of the fall and winter, the battalion kept two companies at a time in the Que Sons. A third, under operational control of the 11th Marines, stationed a platoon at FSB Ryder and platoons or squads at the artillery integrated observation device (IOD)* sites on Hill 425 in the Que Sons, Hill 119 overlooking the An Hoa Basin, and Hills 218 and 270 commanding the Que Son Valley. The remaining rifle company, stationed at Ross, conducted small unit operations around the fire base and constituted the 5th Marines' regimental reserve which stood by to relieve district headquarters and CUPPs. The battalion Headquarters and Service Company at Ross formed its own CUPP platoon which defended two refugee hamlets close to the base.

The 3d Battalion Marines around Ross operated in a joint AO with the Que Son District Regional and Popular Forces. The RFs and PFs concentrated on close-in protection of the hamlets while the Marines, with the exception of the CUPP platoon, patrolled and ambushed on the edges of the populated areas in an effort to prevent infiltration.[46]

The 3d Battalion conducted one named operation

*The IOD was a highly sophisticated and effective day and night observation instrument.

during the Fall-Winter Campaign. This was Operation Noble Canyon, which was aimed at clearing enemy troops from the area around Hill 441 four miles south of FSB Ross. This section of rugged terrain, pocked with caves, had long served the NVA and VC as an assembly area for attacks northward into the Que Son Valley and southward toward Hiep Duc.* Operation Noble Canyon began on 23 October when Company L of the 3d Battalion marched into the objective area after the weather had forced cancellation of a planned helicopter lift. From then until 3 November, Company L, hampered by the late October storms, searched its assigned AO. In light and scattered contacts, the Marines killed four Communists and detained one VC suspect, at a cost to themselves of eight men wounded. They found no large enemy units or supply caches.[47]

When suitable targets were located, the 5th Marines employed its Quick Reaction Force in the lowlands. Late in the morning on 4 November, for example, as the paddy lands were beginning to emerge from the floodwaters, a CUPP unit from Company G engaged 15-20 enemy near the Ba Ren River three miles north of Baldy and called for support. The regiment dispatched the QRF to head off the enemy, who were moving north, while the CUPP squad and elements of the 162d RF Company took blocking positions south of the Communists.

The QRF unit, First Lieutenant John R. Scott's 2d Platoon of Company F, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines caught the enemy on an island in the Ba Ren. The helicopters carrying the platoon landed in the middle of the enemy column. A melee ensued. The NVA and VC, a few of them armed with AK-47s but most equipped only with pistols, scattered in all directions. Some dove into the brush and began firing at the Marines. Others fled, only to be stopped by the surrounding water. The AH-1G gunships escorting the QRF cut down many of the enemy with rockets and machine guns, while Scott's men dispatched others with grenades and rifle fire. Scott later recalled that "it got pretty vicious for a while . . . . We were sweeping the area toward the river, firing and throwing grenades all the time . . . . The NVA were firing and throwing grenades too."[48] One Communist soldier tried to escape by submerging in the river and breathing through a hollow reed, but the Marines spotted him and killed him with a grenade. By 1410, the fight had ended. While one Marine was killed, Scott's Marines had killed nine enemy, and the gunships claimed 11 more. Policing the battlefield, the Marines picked up one AK-47, three 9mm pistols, and an assortment of American and Chinese grenades, packs, and miscellaneous equipment.[49]

Throughout October and November, units from the Americal Division took over the defense of much of the lowland part of the 5th Marines' AO. The Army troops came in initially for Operation Tulare Falls I, a large U.S.-Vietnamese-South Korean effort to forestall a predicted series of Communist attacks in the populated area between Hill 55 and the Que Son Mountains. The 5th Marines was given command of all the American troops in the operation, which was coordinated by the Quang Nam Province Chief. Since the 5th Marines' battalions were fully committed to other operations, III MAF and XXIV Corps decided to place a battalion-size task force from the Americal Division under the operational control of the 5th Marines. Named Task Force Saint after its commander, Lieutenant Colonel C. E. Saint, USA, the task force consisted of the 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry reinforced by the 1st Squadron (-), 1st Armored Cavalry; a troop of air cavalry (several served with the task force in rotation); and a 105mm howitzer platoon from the 3d Battalion, 82d Artillery. All these units were drawn from the 196th Brigade of the Americal Division.

Task Force Saint established its CP at LZ Baldy on 2 October, and on the following day it began operations in an area north and east of the combat base. Guided by CUPP Marines from Company G, the Army troops saturated the countryside with small-unit patrols and ambushes, using their air-cavalry troop as a quick reaction force. In minor contacts, Task Force Saint killed 30 NVA and VC and detained 21 suspected Viet Cong while suffering 19 wounded. Operation Tulare Falls I ended on 15 October, having succeeded in its purpose of forestalling a wave of enemy attacks. The same day, Task Force Saint departed for the Americal Division TAOR.[50]

At the end of October, the Army units of Task Force Saint returned to the 5th Marines' TAOR as Task Force Burnett. In Operation Tulare Falls II, jointly planned by the 1st Marine Division and the Americal Division, Task Force Burnett was again under operational control of the 5th Marines. Between 27 and 31 October, the Army force established its CP at Baldy and from then until 30 November, it patrolled around the northeastern foothills of the Que Sons. Using the same tactics they had employed earlier, the Army troops

*For details of earlier Marine activities in this area, see Chapter 2.

killed 22 VC, captured two, and seized 14,950 pounds of rice, while suffering casualties of four killed and 26 wounded. By 1 December, the units of Task Force Burnett had returned to their parent division, but Army operations in the Marine division TAOR continued through the end of the year in the far southwestern Que Son Mountains.[51]

While the Americal Division operations had produced only modest results, they had helped the thinly spread 5th Marines to keep pressure on the Communists throughout its TAOR and had assisted Operation Hoang Dieu by blocking the enemy's routes of withdrawal from the lowlands to the mountains. As Colonel Estey, the 1st Marine Division G-3, said, "Colonel Judge just doesn't have the units that are necessary to adequately saturate his AO and this is what the 23d Infantry [Americal] task force is doing, and they're welcome any time in the area."[52]

As the meager results of the Tulare Falls operations indicated, the enemy in the lowlands of the 5th Marines' TAOR seemed few and unaggressive throughout the fall and winter. They moved in groups of no more than three to five men and devoted their efforts to recruiting, accumulating supplies, and harassing the allies with sniper fire and boobytraps.

Only in early December did the Communists show a willingness to fight. On 3 December, two platoons of VC, believed to have been members of the *105th Main Force Battalion*, attacked the Que Son District Headquarters. They struck at 0230 with fire bombs and small arms, only to be met and driven off by the RF and PF defenders. The raid resulted in the destruction of three huts, the death of one PF soldier, and the wounding of eight. The Viet Cong left one man dead on the field.[53]

The enemy launched a more intense attack on 9 December. Before dawn on that day, an estimated 60-80 VC asaulted the CP of the 1st Platoon of Company G, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines near the village of Phu Thai three miles southwest of Baldy. Covered by a barrage of mortar rounds, rockets, grenades, and small arms fire, the VC rushed the east side of the perimeter and became entangled in the wire. CUPP Marines and RFs blasted the attackers with rifle, machine gun fire, and mortars and called for artillery support. The action continued until sunrise when the enemy, unable to penetrate the perimeter, withdrew. The VC left 11 dead in the wire and a litter of abandoned weapons, including four AK-47s and one B-40 rocket launcher. Two of the Marine defenders were wounded seriously enough to need medical evacuation; the RFs lost two soldiers killed and 14 wounded. On the afternoon of the 9th, Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky of the Republic of Vietnam, then on a tour of Quang Nam, visited the compound and congratulated the Marines and RFs for their small but unquestionable victory.[54]

1st Marines Operations, October-December 1970

During the last months of 1970, Colonel Paul X. "PX" Kelley's 1st Marines continued to protect the Rocket Belt. Each of the regiment's battalions defended the same general area of operations it had had since March, although the boundaries of each battalion's TAOR had been shifted and enlarged by the Keystone Robin Alpha troop redeployments. The 3d Battalion remained responsible for the arc of the Rocket Belt north and northwest of Da Nang. The 1st Battalion, now extended into the Thuong Duc corridor, guarded the western and southwestern sector. The 2d Battalion operated in the heavily populated and Viet Cong-infested farmlands between Hill 55 and the South China Sea.

The two massive Vietnamese saturation operations, Hoang Dieu and Hoang Dieu 101, increased the number of ARVN and RF/PF small-unit activities within the 1st Marines' TAOR and forced curtailment of the use of artillery. For each of these operations, Colonel Kelley directed his battalions to conduct as many joint activities as possible with the RFs and PFs in their TAORs, emphasizing cordon and search operations. Kelley enjoined his battalions to give "maximum support" to the efforts of the districts in which they operated—Dai Loc and Hieu Duc for the 1st Battalion, Hoa Vang for the 2d, and Hoa Vang and Hieu Duc for the 3d. The battalions were to take special care in coordinating their patrols and ambushes with those of the ARVN, RFs and PFs, making sure that Marines in the field always knew where their allies were operating. Beyond reductions in artillery fire and limitation of small-unit activities in some areas, however, Hoang Dieu and Hoang Dieu 101 had little effect on the endless round of squad and platoon patrols and ambushes with which the 1st Marines protected the Rocket Belt.[55]

The 1st Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Robert P. Rose, had moved companies onto Hills 52, 65, and 37 to protect Route 4 where it passed the foot of Charlie Ridge toward Thuong Duc. On Hill 52, the westernmost of the three defended by the battalion, Company C came under persistent Communist

pressure early in the fall. The company, commanded by First Lieutenant James N. Wood, Jr., had its CP on the hill, a low elevation which overlooks Route 4 and the Vu Gia River to the south of it and is itself overlooked from the north by Charlie Ridge.

On 28 September, the enemy began a series of harassing attacks on Hill 52. The action started close to midnight when a trip flare went off on the west side of Company C's perimeter, revealing two enemy soldiers trying to work their way through the barbed wire. The alerted Marines attacked the infiltrators with small arms and grenades, but with no observable result. This incident was followed by a night of sightings of groups of four or five NVA or VC and brief exchanges of fire. In the most costly of these for Company C, a Marine squad shooting at enemy in the wire was hit from the rear by two RPG rounds, losing two men killed and two more wounded. Early on the 29th, Marines on Hill 52 spotted nine enemy swimming across the Vu Gia from the south bank. Catching the Communists in the middle of the river, the Marines opened fire with mortars and recoilless rifles and directed artillery on the Communists' position. By dawn, the NVA and VC around the perimeter had withdrawn. Marines sweeping the area of the various contacts discovered four enemy dead and picked up a 9mm pistol, 31 grenades, and an RPG launcher with five rockets.[56]

Enemy harassment of Company C continued until 9 October. Daily, the North Vietnamese or Viet Cong fired at the Marine position with mortars, and they occasionally used recoilless rifles, RPGs, and rockets. Snipers in a treeline northwest of the hill also harassed the Marines. Helicopters in the area frequently came

Marines of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines prepare to celebrate the 195th birthday of the Marine Corps on 10 November 1970 in a formal ceremony on the aluminum helicopter pad on Firebase Ross. The Ross observation tower can be seen in the background.

Marine Corps Historical Collection

under fire. In a total of 20 attacks, the Communists hit Hill 52 with 52 60mm and 10 82mm mortar shells, 33 75mm recoilless rifle rounds, 2 RPG rounds, and 4 122mm rockets.

Company C met every attack with mortar and recoilless rifle fire and called for counterbattery artillery fire against the suspected enemy positions. The enemy gunners, who usually fired from the hills north and southwest of Hill 52, were well protected by the rough terrain and proved difficult to silence. Nevertheless, the rapid and well-directed Marine counterfire forced the Communists to change position frequently and kept the bombardment sporadic and inaccurate. In the entire series of attacks by fire, Company C suffered only six Marines seriously wounded. Beginning on 4 October, jets of the 1st MAW flew a series of strikes against enemy mortar positions which the artillery could not reach. By 9 October, these strikes had forced the Communists to break off their attack. Marine commanders believed that ammunition shortages caused by the heavy October rains also had helped curtail the Communists' harassment.[57]

Enemy aggressiveness in the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines' TAOR diminished after the October floods. The battalion spent the last months of 1970 carrying out small-unit patrols and ambushes and protecting engineer minesweeping teams on Route 4. As Vietnamese Regional and Popular Forces increased their activity around the villages and hamlets, the battalion, in November, conducted a company-size sweep on Charlie Ridge and later established a patrol base there for reconnaissance teams. From 12-15 November, and again on 19-20 November, two companies swept the Football Island area near the Thu Bon north of An Hoa. Hunting for enemy food caches, the companies found about 2,000 pounds of hidden rice and corn. They also engaged one group of five NVA/VC, killing one and wounding and capturing another. During December, the battalion conducted two search and destroy operations on Charlie Ridge, and it provided two companies to block for an ARVN sweep south of Route 4 near Hill 37. None of these operations produced significant contact.[58]

During December, the 1st Battalion turned over the static defense of two of its major fortified positions to the South Vietnamese. In the far northern part of its TAOR, the battalion handed Hill 10 over to local Vietnamese forces between 27 November and 2 December. Shortly thereafter, it gave up Hill 52 on which Company C had earlier stood siege. The division and 1st Marines staffs had begun a reconsideration of the military value of the hill on 24 October, and on 3 December, III MAF agreed to their proposal for its abandonment on grounds that the Marines no longer needed it as a patrol base or an artillery position. Instead of holding the hill, the 1st Marines would protect Route 4 to Thuong Duc by mobile operations and by establishing an infantry reconnaissance patrol base north of Hill 52 on Charlie Ridge. Withdrawal of Marines from Hill 52 began on 9 December and was completed by the 13th. The redeployment left the 1st Battalion with fixed positions on Hills 65 and 37 and with the better part of three companies free for maneuver in the field.[59]

The 2d Battalion, under Lieutenant Colonel Donald J. Norris, who had taken over on 13 September from the ill-fated Lieutenant Colonel Leftwich, emphasized population control and efforts to eradicate the VC underground in the many hamlets in its TAOR. As it had since June, the battalion deployed three of its companies throughout the fall and winter in assigned AOs and kept one in reserve for special operations and, after 22 November, for QRF duty. The 2d Batalion also conducted operations with ROKMC and 51st ARVN units. To reduce boobytrap casualties, the three companies in the field did most of their patrolling and ambushing at night (when the 2d Battalion believed the enemy removed many mines to let their own men move) and tracked movement in their AOs during the day from observation posts and watchtowers. After Operation Hoang Dieu began, the 2d Battalion cooperated with Vietnamese RFs and PFs and with CAP Marines to maintain daily checkpoints on major roads and to cordon and search hamlets or conduct surprise raids on suspected VC hideouts and headquarters.

On 10 November,* in order to increase mobility, the battalion directed its three rifle companies in the field to dismantle all their fixed defensive positions, mostly CPs and patrol bases. This would leave the battalion with only the fortifications of Camp Lauer and

*The 10th of November 1775 is the Marine Corps birthday. While the war went on throughout the III MAF TAOR, Marine commands took time to conduct modest ceremonies to honor the 195th birthday of the Marine Corps. Colonel Don H. Blanchard, the Chief of Staff, 1st Marine Division, later remembered visiting several of the more remote outposts, and was guest of honor of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines (with whom he served in Korea) in the morning and celebrated with the Marines at FSB Ross in the afternoon. Col Don H. Blanchard, Comments on draft ms, 2Jun83 (Vietnam Comment File).

with two observation posts and four watch towers, the latter manned only during the day and on moonlit nights. The companies in the field were to change position daily within their AOs. Each day the battalion S-2 provided the companies a list of recommended patrol missions on the basis of which each company commander would plan his activities for the next 24 hours. While three companies operated in this manner, the fourth would remain at Camp Lauer, serving as both the regimental Quick Reaction Force and the battalion reserve.[60]

Rapid and imaginative exploitation of current intelligence proved successful for the battalion during November. On the 15th, the battalion responded to a report from an informant that the VC were going to hold a political meeting that night in An Tru (1), a hamlet just south of Marble Mountain and Camp Lauer. Lieutenant Colonel Norris and his operations officer, Major John S. Grinalds, set a trap. They knew that the VC customarily approached An Tru (1) by boat along a shallow lake south of the hamlet and would flee by the same route if infantry approached from Camp Lauer. Therefore, they arranged for a Vietnamese Seal* team to swim stealthily to an ambush position overlooking the lake on the west side. Then they sent a squad of Company G sweeping noisily into the hamlet from the east side. The Marines flushed out five VC who, as expected, piled into two sampans and paddled out into the lake toward what they thought was safety. They ran directly into the Seal ambush, which blew them out of their boats at close range. The Marines and Seals recovered the body of one of the enemy. The others, almost certainly killed, sank with their weapons and were not found.[61]

Three days later, at 1322, Companies E and G deployed from helicopters to assault the hamlet of Quang Dong (1), one and one-half miles east of Hill 55, where intelligence indicated a VC headquarters might be located. Company G swept into the hamlet while a platoon from Company E and elements of the 4th Battalion, 51st ARVN Regiment took up blocking positions around it. An enemy force of unknown size fled the hamlet and ran into the Marines of Company E who, with the aid of a Cobra gunship, killed three and wounded and captured two others, one of them a NVA lieutenant. A search of the hamlet turned up 150 pounds of wheat and 125 pounds of rice in buried caches, 5 boobytraps, 1 AK-47, and 2 bunkers made of steel-reinforced concrete. The Marines sent 85 civilians to Hill 55 to be screened as VC suspects and set ambushes around the bunkers and food caches. Before the operation ended on 20 November, the ambushes had resulted in three more enemy dead and three weapons captured. The Marines suffered no casualties.[62]

In December, two companies of the 2d Battalion and a mobile battalion CP were detached for most of the month to support the 5th Marines in Imperial Lake. As a result, the battalion made fewer attacks within its TAOR. Nevertheless, on 7 December, again working with a Seal team, two rifle companies and a RF company cordoned off a known VC haven near a finger lake one and one-half miles south of Camp Lauer. After the cordon had been established, the Marines worked over the area within it with mortar fire and air strikes and then began a thorough search which continued through the end of the month. By 31 December, they had found 1 dead VC, 3 rifles, 1,350 rounds of AK-47 ammunition, 40 boobytraps, 11 81mm and 60mm mortar shells, and about 6 pounds of documents in the target area.[63]

In the northwestern part of the Rocket Belt, Lieutenant Colonel Marc A. Moore's 3d Battalion operated in the thinly populated foothills west of Da Nang and in the villages along the Cu De River. Small-unit patrols and ambushes, most of them aimed at preventing rocket and mortar attacks on Da Nang, continued to form the bulk of the battalion's activities, varied with frequent company-size sweeps of the hills west of Outpost Reno and the rugged mountains north of the Cu De. From 22-31 December, the battalion furnished the 1st Marines' Quick Reaction Force.

During the Fall-Winter Campaign, the 3d Battalion centered much of its attention on the villages of Ap Quan Nam and Kim Lien in the northern part of its TAOR. Ap Quan Nam, just south of the Cu De, long had been a center for enemy infiltration, political agitation, and rice collection. Kim Lien was located on Route 1, a mile north of the vital Nam O Bridge over the Cu De, and bordered the large Esso gasoline storage depot. It offered the enemy an assembly and supply distribution point easily accessible from base areas in the mountains above Hai Van Pass.

On 19 October, in cooperation with the 1/158th RF

*Seal teams operated under the Vietnamese Coastal Security Service. Each consisted of 12 South Vietnamese Navy personnel dressed in black pajamas like the enemy and carrying AK-47s. The teams, accompanied by U.S. Navy advisors, were used to block traffic along waterways or, as in this case, to move into position by water and conduct ambushes.

Company, Company I of Moore's battalion started an intensive population control campaign in Ap Quan Nam (1) and (2). The two companies first surrounded the hamlets with checkpoints to control movement of people in and out. Then they began a house-to-house census, registering each inhabitant and preparing a detailed map of each home and its surroundings. By continually comparing actual observation of the hamlets with this recorded information, allied officers hoped to stop infiltration and the accumulation of supplies by the enemy more quickly. By 20 December, the Marines and RFs had finished the census and registration. They had channeled all movement into and out of the hamlets past guard posts where they verified each person's registration and checked names and descriptions against a blacklist of known local VC. By the end of the year, the campaign seemed to be succeeding, since the number of enemy sightings and contacts in the Ap Quan Nam area declined.[64]

Action around the village of Kim Lien intensified early in November. At 2400 on the 4th, three enemy entered Kim Lien and killed an assistant hamlet chief, two members of the People's Self-Defense Force, and a civilian. They threatened similar action against anyone else who took up arms for the GVN. Early in the morning of 6 November, 30 NVA and VC returned to the village, collected 400 pounds of rice, and kidnapped a minor local official.

The enemy came back before dawn on 7 November, but this time Marines of the 1st Platoon of Company I were waiting. At 0200, the platoon, in ambush west of Kim Lien, saw 10-15 NVA, all armed, approaching the village from the northwest and six others at the same time leaving the community. The Marines opened fire at a range of about 30 meters with small arms, M79s, and M72 LAAWs and set off several claymore mines. The NVA returned small arms fire and fled, and two mortar rounds exploded near the Marines, but they suffered no casualties in the brief fight. Searching the area later, the Marines found three dead North Vietnamese, two AK-47s, a pistol, and an assortment of equipment and documents.[65]

Following this encounter, on 16 November the 3d Battalion helilifted a platoon from Company I into the foothills west of Kim Lien to hunt for a suspected enemy base camp while a platoon of Company K blocked to the eastward. The brief operation produced no contacts or discoveries. From 21-30 November, Company K and elements of Company L, directed by a mobile battalion CP, cooperated with troops of the 125th RF Group in a cordon and search of Kim Lien, and the following month the battalion began a population control operation there similar to the one in Ap Quan Nam. By 31 December, Company I, which had returned to the area north of the Cu De after operating for several weeks further south, had established a permanent cordon around the village to keep out enemy food details and propaganda detachments. The battalion issued orders on the 31st for a population census to begin on 2 January.[66]

The 1st Marines' Quick Reaction Force, established on 22 November and initially consisting of the 3d Platoon of Company H, 2d Battalion, was employed six times during November. In the most successful of these actions, on the 28th, the 3d Platoon landed near the hamlet of Le Nam (2), six miles northeast of An Hoa. Responding to an IOD sighting of three enemy, the 3d Platoon, later reinforced by the 2d Platoon of Company H, swept through the hamlet, driving two VC to their deaths under the guns of the escorting Cobras. The Marines later found another dead VC in the hamlet and rounded up a defector and two suspects. They set up an ambush near the hamlet that night which killed one more VC and captured three. QRF operations continued through December, with the 3d Battalion and later the 1st Battalion furnishing the rifle platoon, but produced no significant results.[67]

The 1st Marines' use of artillery and air support declined during the fall and winter under the impact of the division's restrictive fire plans. Nevertheless, the regiment continued to employ aircraft and artillery against both observed and intelligence targets, mostly in the thinly populated or uninhabited western and northwestern fringes of the 1st and 3d Battalions' TAORs. The 3d Battalion consistently required about 50 percent of the artillery fire used by the regiment. In November, for example, of 12,196 rounds expended, 6,611 fell in the 3d Battalion's TAOR, while the 2d Battalion called for no artillery missions at all in November.[68]

Use of supporting air strikes by the 1st Marines, already limited by the restrictions imposed in connection with Operation Hoang Dieu, was confined to the area west of Route 1 by a division order of 13 December. East of the highway, Marines could call in air strikes only to support troops in contact or when ground troops intended immediately to sweep the target area. The division issued this order because recent strikes

east of the highway had produced little evidence of casualties or damage to the enemy and because "tactical air strikes east of QL 1 have an adverse psychological impact on the local Vietnamese populace residing in the area since the area is regarded as a secure area."[69]

In the last three months of the year, the 1st Marines lost 11 men killed in action or dead of wounds and 127 wounded. Its battalions in the same period killed 31 NVA and VC and took six prisoners. Four enemy defected in the regiment's TAOR, and Colonel Kelley's Marines captured 33 individual and two crew-served weapons. Probably more significant as an indication that the regiment was accomplishing its primary mission, the enemy during October, November, and December launched only three rocket attacks on Da Nang. None of the 12 missiles fired in these attacks did significant damage.[70]

The War in Quang Nam at the End of the Year

The 1st Marine Division in December was operating with less than half the number of troops it had at the beginning of the year. From over 28,000 officers and men in 12 infantry and five artillery battalions, it had shrunk, by December, to about 12,500 officers and men in six infantry and two artillery battalions. Nevertheless, the division continued to defend essentially the same TAOR it had defended in January.[71]

The division's ability to protect the same area with fewer men resulted, in part, from improvements in the South Vietnamese forces in Quang Nam and even more from drastic reductions in enemy strength in the province. From an estimated 11,000-12,000 troops of all kinds in January, by December Communist strength had fallen to about 8,500. Much of this decline, according to American analysts, resulted from the Communists' inability to replace their casualties. Fewer troops had infiltrated from North Vietnam in 1970 than in 1969, and captured documents indicated that the Communists' local recruiting efforts were falling short of their goals.

Changes in Communist organization in Quang Nam appeared to parallel the enemy's dwindling troop strength. By the end of the year, *Front 4* was believed to have discontinued its three subordinate wing headquarters, probably for lack of personnel to staff them and units for them to control. American intelligence in December located only one full NVA regiment, the *38th*, in the province. Of the other two which had been there in January, the *141st* had moved elsewhere and the *31st* had been reduced to one battalion. The enemy seemed to be continuing and expanding the practice of disbanding NVA and VC main force units to rebuild local guerrilla organizations.

According to increasingly numerous and reliable reports reaching allied intelligence, hunger, disease, and despair were eroding the fighting efficiency of the remaining enemy troops. A year of systematic allied attacks on base areas and supply routes had reduced many enemy units to half their usual rations of rice and other foodstuffs. The capture of hospitals, medical personnel, and medical supply caches in the Que Sons and elsewhere had diminished the Communists' ability to offer even rudimentary care to their sick and wounded. Prisoners and deserters carried tales of enemy soldiers refusing to fight, of friction between North Vietnamese and Viet Cong, of military and civilian discontent with Communist policies, and of loss of confidence in the possibility of victory. Such evidence had to be heavily discounted, drawn as so much of it was from the fainthearted, the discontented, and the disillusioned in the enemy ranks. (American opponents of the war spread similar stories about allied troops, and, in fact the Marines, like the other American Services in Vietnam, faced increasingly severe discipline and morale problems during 1970.)*

Declines in all forms of enemy activity constituted more tangible evidence of diminished Communist strength. In the single month of January 1970, allied troops and aerial observers reported sighting 4,425 enemy troops. By contrast, in four months between 1 September and 31 December, only 4,159 NVA and VC were spotted. Fire attacks followed a similar pattern. In January, the Communists fired 658 rounds, mostly mortars and rockets, at allied troops and installations. They took the last six months of the year, July through December, to approximate their January total, firing in that period 638 rounds. Even terrorism, now the enemy's principal offensive tactic, appeared to decline, although weaknesses in the reporting system made the figures on this subject unreliable.**[72]

As they examined casualty statistics for the year, many 1st Marine Division officers concluded that the

*For details of III MAF's efforts to cope with these problems, see Chapter 20.

**The accuracy of the figures on terrorism is doubtful, as the South Vietnamese were believed by the Marines to conceal many incidents.

Marine Corps Historical Collection

A Marine carrying an M60 machine gun plods over a slick and muddy rice paddy dike, participating in a search for suspected Viet Cong infiltrators in a hamlet near Da Nang.

division's combat effectiveness was improving, even as its troop strength and the intensity of the fighting declined. The division's total loss during 1970 of 403 killed and 1,625 wounded represented a reduction by about 61 percent from the 1969 totals of 1,051 killed and 9,286 wounded. From over 9,600 killed in 1969, reported Communist casualties had fallen to about 5,200 killed in 1970, a reduction of some 46 percent. Summarizing the division staff's analysis of the meaning of these figures, Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, the assistant division commander, declared:

> Kill ratios are always invidious, but it can be seen that while enemy losses went down in 1970 they did not decline at the same rate as Marine losses. So we can conclude that the combat effectiveness of the division actually improved during 1970.[73]

Throughout 1970, the 1st Marine Division had accomplished its mission with diminishing resources. In

spite of reductions in strength, it had continued to protect Da Nang and the populated areas around it, and it had continued to maintain offensive pressure on the Communists' mountain bases. As the year ended, the division's military efforts appeared to be succeeding and, if anything, to be increasing in effectiveness. Regular military operations, however, in Quang Nam as elsewhere in South Vietnam, were conducted largely in support of what earlier in the conflict had been called the "Other War"—the allied effort to break the Viet Cong's political hold on the people and to prepare the Government and Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam to assume the whole task of defending and rebuilding the nation. That effort, also, had continued throughout 1970, and Marines had contributed to it.

PART III
PACIFICATION

CHAPTER 7

Pacification 1970: Plans, Organization, and Problems

Pacification: The Nationwide Perspective—The 1970 GVN Pacification and Development Plan
Pacification Plans and Organization in Military Region 1—Pacification Situation in Quang Nam, Early 1970

Pacification: The Nationwide Perspective

In 1957, a French officer, summing up the lessons of his country's defeat in Indochina, wrote of warfare against guerrillas:

> The destruction of rebel forces is not an end in itself: we know that as long as the enemy's infrastructure remains in place, he is able to maintain his control over the people and can replenish his decimated forces. Military operations are therefore only worthwhile insofar as they facilitate winning the people and contribute to the dismantling of the revolutionary politico-military organization . . . .[1]

This lesson, which the French had learned painfully in the 1950s, the Americans and their South Vietnamese allies had relearned, equally painfully, in the 1960s. By early 1970, "pacification," long a major concern of the Marines in Vietnam, had become the center of country-wide allied strategy. In theory and to an increasing extent in practice, all allied military operations, from battalion-size sweeps of enemy base areas to squad ambushes on the outskirts of hamlets, were conducted in support of pacification. Increasingly, too, allied forces engaged in a variety of paramilitary and nonmilitary pacification activities.

Definitions of "pacification" varied with time and with the agency using the word. The III MAF/ICTZ Combined Campaign Plan for 1970 defined pacification as:

> The military, political, economic, and social process of establishing or re-establishing local government responsive to and involving the participation of the people. It includes the provision of sustained, credible territorial security, the destruction of the enemy's underground government, the assertion or re-assertion of political control and involvement of the people in government, and the initiation of economic and social activity capable of self-sustenance and expansion . . . .[2]

After years of confusion about goals and policies, resulting in divided authority and fragmented administration, the Americans and South Vietnamese had developed and were implementing a comprehensive pacification strategy. This strategy involved, first, the use of regular military units to clear the NVA and VC main forces and most of the guerrillas from the populated rural areas. The regular forces then were to keep the enemy out by a combination of small-unit patrolling, ambushing, and larger sweeps of base areas. Within the screen thus established, Regional and Popular Forces and paramilitary forces and civilian agencies of the Republic of Vietnam would attempt to destroy the enemy political organization among the people, reestablish government control in each village and hamlet, and, it was hoped, win the allegiance of the people through economic and social improvements.

In the GVN's Accelerated Pacification Campaign, proclaimed in October 1968 by President Nguyen Van Thieu, the allies broke down these general concepts of pacification into specific tasks and assigned responsibility for each task to particular civil or military agencies. The plan set goals to be met for each task at national, corps, and province levels. Expanding upon the 1968 plan, the GVN Pacification and Development Plan for 1969 continued and refined the definition of tasks and assignment of goals and provided the framework for a nationwide effort.

By early 1970, both the United States and South Vietnam had achieved substantial central control over the many civilian and military agencies involved in pacification. For the Americans, the U.S. Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), formed in mid-1967, combined most of the personnel engaged in pacification and in advising GVN nonmilitary agencies into one chain of command under MACV. The CORDS organization paralleled the military and political structure of the South Vietnamese Government, with a deputy for CORDS under each U.S. corps area commander and lower-ranking CORDS deputies at province and district headquarters. In Saigon, the national head of CORDS in 1970, Ambassador William Colby, was a member of General Abrams's staff. On the South Vietnamese side, a Central Pacification and Development Council (CPDC),* chaired by the Prime Minister and including represen-

*The CPDC was defined in the 1970 Combined Campaign Plan as the "ministerial council at the cabinet level responsible for planning, coordinating and executing the national Pacification and Development Program."

Marine Corps Historical Collection

South Vietnamese Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky is shown with MajGen Charles F. Widdecke, Commanding General, 1st Marine Division on a visit to I Corps.

tatives of all government agencies, prepared the annual Pacification and Development Plans. Similar military region and province councils, working closely with their counterpart CORDS organizations, oversaw implementation of the national plans at lower levels of government.

Between 1967 and 1970, President Nguyen Van Thieu had consolidated his administrative and political control over South Vietnam. In the process of doing so, he devoted increased attention to pacification and made important advances on the crucial problems of development of local government and land reform. Thieu's regime restored to the villages and hamlets their ancient right, suspended under Ngo Dinh Diem, to elect their own governing councils.

President Thieu delegated to these elected councils increased control over local budgets and taxation, and he gave the village chiefs, who were chosen by the councils, command of the PF platoons, Revolutionary Development teams, and national police working in their villages. To enlarge their prestige and self-confidence as well as improve their training, he held national conferences of village and hamlet officials. Thieu also took the province chiefs out from under the authority of the senior ARVN commanders in their provinces and made them responsible directly to their military region commanders and through them to Saigon. At the same time, he transferred the power to appoint province and district chiefs from the local ARVN commanders to the central government. American observers interpreted these changes as efforts by Thieu to create a new political constituency for himself outside the RVNAF and the established Saigon political parties, but the changes also offered the promise of a more responsive and efficient civil government—a major goal of pacification.[3]

Land reform, for years urged upon the GVN by its American advisors as a means of winning the loyalty of the peasants and half-heartedly attempted by previous Saigon regimes, also took a step forward under President Thieu. Early in 1970, he signed the "Land to the Tiller" bill passed the year before by the National Assembly after long debate. The bill drastically limited the amount of land any one person could own and required distribution of the excess acreage (for which the owners would be compensated) to the tenants who actually worked it and to other categories of needy and deserving Vietnamese. While implementation of the law quickly bogged down in administrative and legal difficulties, its adoption gave the GVN a means of matching Communist promises on an issue long monopolized by the VC.[4]

The 1970 GVN Pacification and Development Plan

On 10 November 1969, President Thieu promulgated his government's 1970 Pacification and Development Plan which was approved by President Thieu, the Prime Minister, and the Cabinet. It was to be signed in formal ceremony by each province chief and American province senior advisor. Designed to complement the allies' military combined campaign plan for the year, the Pacification and Development Plan constituted the guiding directive on pacification for South Vietnamese and Free World Military Armed Forces (FWMAF). General Abrams distributed copies of it to the United States corps area commanders, including the Commanding General of III MAF, with instructions to regard it as "guidance, directive in nature to advisory personnel at all echelons."[5]

The 1970 plan was designed to expand the pacification advances of 1969. During that year the GVN and its allies had been able to extend their military presence and influence into most of South Vietnam's villages and hamlets. This had resulted in impressive territorial gains. By the end of the year, CORDS estimated that about 90 percent of the South Vietnamese people lived in localities wholly or partially GVN-controlled and that the enemy remained a major military threat in only nine provinces, including Quang Nam and Quang Ngai in MR 1.*[6] The GVN and its allies now planned to consolidate these security gains and to reinforce them by extending local self-government and intensifying efforts at economic and social improvement. As the preamble to the 1970 plan put it:

> . . . We will vigorously push our attacks into the Communist base areas and exploit their weakness to eliminate them completely from pacified areas, and thus create an advantageous milieu so we can increase the quality of life in the future. At the same time we must bring a new vitality to our people in a framework of total security, so that the people can build and develop a free and prosperous society.[7]

The 1970 plan contained five guiding principles, five operational principles, and eight objectives. The guiding and operational principles were pacification truisms and generalities, such as "Pacification and Development must unite to become one" (Guiding Principle One), and "Establish the hamlet where the people are; do not move the people to establish the hamlet" (Operational Principle Three). The practical goals for action for the year were established in the eight objectives, which were: "Territorial Security; Protection of the People against Terrorism; People's Self Defense; Local Administration; Greater National Unity; Brighter Life for War Victims; People's Information; and Prosperity for All." These titles covered programs or combinations of programs, most of which had been underway for many years.[8]

Under "Territorial Security," the Vietnamese Government committed itself to assuring that 100 percent of its people lived in hamlets and villages with pacification ratings of A, B, or C, the three highest grades on the six-level evaluation scale employed in the CORDS Hamlet Evaluation System (HES).* The government set the goal of reducing attacks, shellings, terrorism, and sabotage by 50 percent of the 1969 level in areas being pacified and 75 percent in areas rated secure. Expansion in numbers and quality of the national police "in order to help the local governments maintain law and order in both rural and urban areas" also came under this objective.

"Protection of the People against Terrorism" covered the program codenamed Phoenix by the Americans and Phung Hoang by the Vietnamese. This program had been previously conducted under tight secrecy by Vietnamese police and intelligence agencies with supervision and advice from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Its objective was "neutralization" by death or capture of members of the VCI, the Com-

*The other seven were Binh Dinh, Phu Yen, Pleiku, and Kontum in MR 2; and Kien Hoa, Vinh Binh, and An Xuyen in MR 4. Reportedly there were no enemy-controlled villages in MR 3.

*The Americans had instituted HES in 1966 to reduce the vast amount of pacification-related information to a more or less reliable set of statistical indicators of progress or lack of it. Data for the system was collected by the U.S. senior district advisors who completed periodic questionnaires on each hamlet and village. The questions covered all aspects of pacification – security, political, and socio-economic. The information thus obtained was collated and translated into statistics. The system came under much criticism for incompleteness and biases in reporting and analysis, and on 1 January 1970, CORDS put into effect the improved Hamlet Evaluation System (HES)-70. While always controversial and viewed with skepticism by many Americans in the field, HES did provide a unified quantitative picture of what was going on in pacification, and its numbers and percentages at least served to indicate trends.

CORDS in July 1969 defined its security letter categories as follows:

A. Hamlet has adequate security forces; Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI) has been eliminated; social and economic improvements are under way.

B. A VC threat exists, but so do organized and "partially effective" security forces. VCI has been partially neutralized; self-help programs and economic improvements have been undertaken.

C. The hamlet is subject to VC harassment, the VCI has been identified; the hamlet population participates in self-help programs and local government.

D. VC activities have been reduced, but an internal threat still exists. There is some VC taxation and terrorism. The local populace participates in hamlet government and economic programs.

E. The VC is effective; although some GVN control is evident, the VCI is intact, and the GVN programs are nonexistent or just beginning.

VC. The hamlet is VC-controlled, with no resident government officials or advisors, although military may come in occasionally. The population willingly supports the VC. IDA Pacification Report, 3, p. 296.

Marine Corps Historical Collection

A crying child sits on the steps of what had been his home. Communist gunners had shelled the village, destroying his house and killing his parents.

munist clandestine government and political movement. Late in 1969, the U.S. and the GVN decided to acknowledge Phoenix/Phung Hoang openly as a major element of the pacification program. By doing so, they hoped to rally popular support for it and to coordinate all allied military and political agencies for a more intensive and wide-ranging attack. Therefore, the 1970 Pacification and Development Plan established the goal of eradicating 1,800 known VCI per month and identifying additional members of the infrastructure who were believed to exist, but did not yet have dossiers on file. It prescribed the structure of Phung Hoang organizations down to the district level, in which the national police were to be the "principal operational element" and all other military and civil agencies were to participate. It specified which Communist activists could be considered members of the VCI and which could not and laid out procedures for apprehension, trial, and sentencing.

"People's Self Defense" denoted further expansion and improved equipment and training for the People's Self Defense Force (PSDF). The PSDF, a civilian home guard, had come into spontaneous existence in portions of Saigon, Hue, and other localities after the Communist attacks on the cities during the Tet Offensive of early 1968. The GVN by law extended the organization nationwide in June of 1968 with the ultimate intention of enrolling entire urban and rural populations including women, children, and all men above or below ARVN draft age. The men were to be formed into combat groups, armed, and trained to guard their hamlets and neighborhoods. The women, children, and old people, organized in support groups, would be instructed in first aid, firefighting, and other noncombatant defense tasks. All members were to aid in identifying and capturing local VCI. Many American officials considered the PSDF potentially one of the GVN's most promising pacification devices, more for its mass involvement of people in supporting the government than for its still unproven military value. By early 1970, the PSDF included about 1,288,000 men in combat groups—armed with 339,000 weapons—and 2,000,000 members of support groups.[9] The 1970 Pacification and Development Plan called for enlarging the membership figures respectively to 1,500,000 and 2,500,000 and for increasing the armament of the combat groups to 500,000 weapons, including 15,000 automatic rifles, by the end of the year.

The remaining five objectives constituted the development part of the pacification program. "Local Administration" prescribed plans for electing hamlet, village, municipal, and provincial councils and for improving the skills of local officials.* "Greater National Unity" directed continuation of the "Chieu Hoi" Program under which enemy soldiers and political cadres who surrendered voluntarily were resettled in civilian pursuits or put to work for the allies. The plan set a nationwide goal of obtaining 40,000 new Hoi Chanhs (persons who gave up under the Chieu Hoi program) during the year. "Brighter Life for War Victims" covered aid to refugees, disabled veterans, war widows, and orphans "in order that these people can continue a normal and useful life." The "People's Information" objectives outlined propaganda and psychological warfare themes for the year. "Prosperity for All" covered an array of programs for improving ur-

*These would include second elections for many hamlets and villages whose officials had been elected in 1967 for three-year terms.

ban and rural life, including land reform under the "Land to the Tiller" Act.

The plan assigned responsibility for achieving its goals to the various government ministries and to military regions, provinces, municipalities, and districts. For each of the eight objectives, the plan designated one "responsible ministry," such as the Ministry of Defense for Territorial Security, and listed a number of "participating" and "interested" ministries. Officials of the concerned ministries were to carry out their portions of the plan at military region, province, and district levels. They were to coordinate their activities with each other and with local officials through military region and province Pacification and Development Councils (PDCs) which were also to draft pacification and development plans, based on the national plan, for their areas of responsibility. The national plan for 1970 declared that:

> The CTZ and the province/municipal PDCs must play an active role in local pacification and development, insuring that implementation is comprehensive, not neglecting some areas by concentrating on too narrow a spectrum, and orchestrated so as to create a pacification effort that is interrelated and mutually supporting throughout the land.[10]

Pacification Plans and Organization in Military Region 1

In Military Region 1 (MR-1), as elsewhere in South Vietnam, 1969 had been a year of progress in pacification. Of the 2,900,000 inhabitants of the corps area's five provinces, 2,800,000 people or 93.6 percent by the end of the year resided in hamlets rated A, B, or C under the HES. This percentage dropped to 85.7 early in 1970 under the stricter standards of HES-70, the revised evaluation system introduced by CORDS in January. Elected governments were operating in 91 percent of the villages and 99 percent of the hamlets. The PSDF had enrolled 548,000 members, 287,000 of them in combat groups with 81,000 weapons. Over 5,300 VCI had been neutralized during 1969, and almost 6,000 Hoi Chanhs had rallied to the GVN. I Corps still contained more refugees than any other corps area, between 600,000 and 900,000, but a start

Residents of the same village shown on the previous page rebuild their home after the Viet Cong attack. The Vietnamese Government with supplies donated by CORDS provided the villagers with the necessary building material and tools to reconstruct their houses.

Marine Corps Historical Collection

had been made on resettling them and there were other indications of economic and social improvement.[11]

Corps and province level pacification and development plans for 1970 included efforts to achieve the national goal of 100 percent of the people in A, B, and C hamlets, to kill or capture more than 2,200 VCI during the first half of the year and identify 3,800 others, and to bring in 3,000 Hoi Chanhs in the same period. Plans called for no major enlargement in numbers for the PSDF but for an increase of about 10,000 weapons and the establishment of a military training cadre for each two villages. About one-third of the villages and hamlets and all the provinces and municipalities were to participate in the planned local elections, and over 9,000 officials were to receive training at province or national level. The planners set no numerical goals for refugee resettlement or economic improvement but promised much activity, including training, which would facilitate the self-sufficiency of refugees upon relocations.[12]

The U.S. organization for pacification in I Corps/MR 1 conformed to the standard CORDS structure established in 1967.*[13] Until the change of command in March, III MAF acted as controlling military headquarters for pacification with the civilian Deputy for CORDS as a member of its staff. After the change of command, control of CORDS passed to the Commanding General, XXIV Corps. The Deputy for CORDS, George D. Jacobson, who held Foreign Service rank equivalent to that of a major general, directed the efforts of over 700 military personnel and 150 civilians who were drawn from the Agency for International Development (AID), the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), the Department of Defense, and other agencies. The staff had a division for each major element of the pacification program: Territorial Forces, Phoenix/Phung Hoang, Chieu Hoi, Public Safety, Revolutionary Development, Government Development, Economic Development, Refugees, and Public Health.

Under the regional Deputy for CORDS, the five province senior advisors (PSA), each with a staff similar in structure to that at corps level, worked closely with the GVN province chiefs. The position of the province chiefs, who commanded the RFs and PFs and PSDF as well as directing all aspects of civil government, made the senior advisors attached to them the key American officials for carrying out pacification policies. According to Colonel Wilmer W. Hixson, the senior Marine on the I Corps CORDS staff, the PSA was "the most important single individual in all of Vietnam" in making pacification work. "The scope of his duties are more broad than [those of] any other single officer, of comparable rank . . . . He's the guy that makes it tick in the province."[14] Of the five province senior advisors in MR 1 during the first half of 1970, three were military officers and two were civilians. Under control of the PSAs, the 44 district senior advisors (DSAs) worked with the GVN district chiefs who in their administrative hierarchy were responsible to the province chiefs.

In comparison with the size of its forces in I Corps, the Marine Corps had only small representation on the CORDS staff. During the first half of 1970, the highest-ranking Marine with CORDS was Colonel Hixson, who served as Chief of Staff to the Deputy for CORDS and as Program Coordinator for Security. In the latter job, he supervised the staff sections for Regional and Popular Forces, Phoenix/Phung Hoang, Chieu Hoi, Public Safety, and Revolutionary Development cadre.* Besides Hixson, seven other Marine officers and five enlisted men held corps-level CORDS billets, and four officers served as province psychological warfare advisors. When the 3d Marine Division left Vietnam late in 1969, six officers still having time to serve in-country temporarily joined CORDS as advisors to the paramilitary Revolutionary Development cadres. They were replaced by Army officers as their Vietnam tours ended.

The Marines had no representation at the important province and district senior advisor level, not even in Quang Nam where they were the principal allied military force. Colonel Hixson believed that this situation reduced Marine influence in pacification, saying:

> The Marine Corps made a mistake when they did not get into this program, particularly in Quang Nam Province. It

*In the pre-CORDS days in Vietnam, III MAF had made some of the first American attempts to coordinate civilian and military pacification activity by U.S. and Vietnamese agencies. A relic of the *ad hoc* groupings of those days, the I Corps Combined Coordinating Council, continued to meet sporadically throughout 1970, but it now was "used primarily by the Vietnamese as a channel to short-circuit . . . the proper channels whereby they should get things done." Col Clifford J. Peabody, Debriefing at FMFPac, 8Sept70, Tape 4956, (Oral HistColl, MCHC).

*Hixson received his CORDS assignment from the MACV staff, to which he was attached, rather than from III MAF. For further detail on the activities of other Marines in Vietnam not assigned to III MAF, see Chapter 21.

> would have been an excellent chance to have had the Province Senior Advisor in Quang Nam a Marine, and as many of the District Senior Advisors as we could have . . . Not that the liaison [between III MAF and CORDS] was not good, but it would have been much better had there been Marines on the staff.[15]

Lieutenant Colonel Warren E. Parker, a retired Army officer, who was PSA in Quang Nam from 1968-1970 and who spent eight total years as a PSA after serving two years as a Special Forces officer, years later challenged Colonel Hixson's contention that the PSAs in I Corps should have been Marine officers:

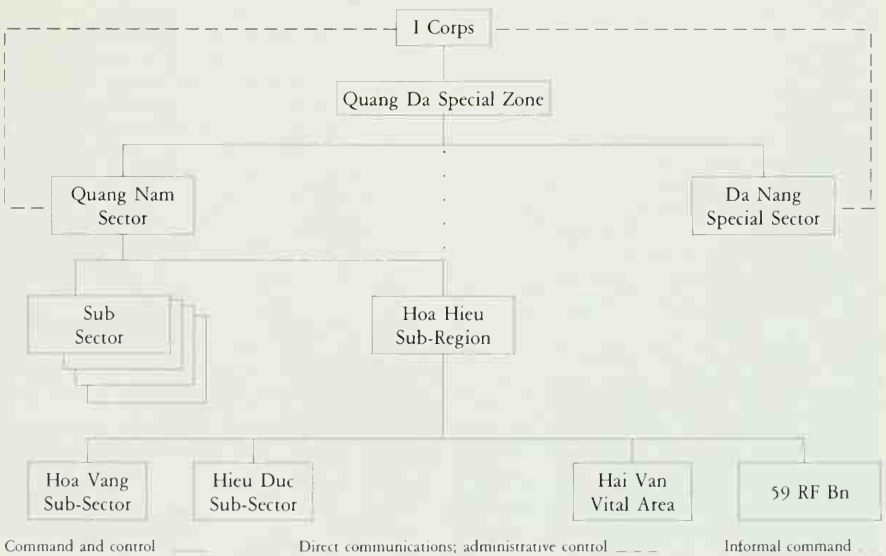
> I consider [the argument] debatable. Although the CG, III MAF was the Corps senior advisor, the PSA was directly responsible to the CORDS chain of command. A Marine officer in the role as a PSA probably would have been more intimidated by the III MAF and Marine division staff. Fortunately, I thought the CORDS-Marine staffs worked remarkably well together.[16]

Pacification Situation in Quang Nam, Early 1970

Throughout most of 1970, Marine pacification efforts were concentrated in Quang Nam Province. Here the Marines had to deal not only with the inherent difficulties of rooting out the Viet Cong, but also with the complexities of divided Vietnamese military and political authority.

As was quite common in Vietnam, an ARVN officer, Colonel Le Tri Tin, served as Province Chief of Quang Nam. Colonel Tin directed civil government and as military sector commander he controlled Quang Nam's RFs and PFs and PSDF units. In his military capacity, Colonel Tin, under an arrangement established by the I Corps commander, Lieutenant General Lam, came under tactical control of Quang Da Special Zone (QDSZ), the senior ARVN headquarters in the province. Reflecting his combined civil and military functions, Tin had two staffs, one military and the other civilian. The latter consisted of 23 officials concerned with administrative, economic, and social matters. Land clearing operations, rice harvesting, and refugee resettlement were among the largely nonmilitary responsibilities with which the province chiefs had to concern themselves. Under Tin, the nine district chiefs/subsector commanders, all ARVN officers, also had both political and military authority within their areas. Separate from Quang Nam Province, the city of Da Nang had its own mayor, appointed from Sai-

ORGANIZATION FOR AREA SECURITY IN QUANG NAM AND DA NANG



gon, to control its civil affairs and militia forces. The city, like the province, came under the control of QDSZ for military purposes.*[17]

Interference from Lieutenant General Lam, who maintained his corps headquarters in Da Nang, complicated and disrupted this apparently straightforward distribution of authority. While QDSZ, for example, controlled the operations of the 51st ARVN Regiment, other regular units stationed in Quang Nam, notably the 1st Ranger Group, the 1st Armored Brigade, and the 17th Armored Cavalry Squadron, were usually under the direct control of Lam. These units displayed little sense of obligation to assist in pacification and security activities. Major John S. Grinalds, S-3 of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, recalled that the armored cavalry, which camped near Hill 55 between operations:

> . . . never provided any support to anyone within the area immediately around Da Nang . . . . Once they got back in our area . . . we couldn't count on them for any kind of support at all. They were also, I think, tied up to General Lam who considered them his special reserve for a lot of reasons and just wouldn't let them deploy and run the risk of getting sunk in somewhere else.[18]

Further confusing command relationships, Lieutenant General Lam on 16 January 1970 established still another military headquarters in Quang Nam called the Hoa Hieu Defensive Area. Supposedly subordinate to Quang Nam Province, this area encompassed Hai Van Pass and the districts of Hieu Duc and Hoa Vang which surrounded Da Nang. Hoa Hieu controlled the 1/25 RF Group, which protected Hai Van Pass, the RFs and PFs of Hieu Duc and Hoa Vang Districts, and an independent RF unit, the 59th Battalion. The new headquarters was to "utilize the RF and PF that are available . . . for ARVN only operations or for coordinating operations with allied forces," "to give Hoa Vang and Hieu Duc a hand in military matters for the good of . . . Pacification and Development," and to "deal accordingly and effectively with enemy intention of launching mortar and ground attacks on Da Nang City and its outskirts."[19]

In July, a U.S. Army advisor summed up the convoluted South Vietnamese command relations in the province:

> Quang Da [Special Zone] is a tactical headquarters, primarily concerned with tactical operations in the unpopulated areas. It has the authority to establish AO's and it has tactical command over Quang Nam Sector [Province] and Da Nang Special Sector. It also exercises rather direct supervision over Hoa Hieu Sub-Region, issuing orders direct to Hoa Hieu without going through Quang Nam Sector. As a result, Quang Nam is often uninformed concerning the tactical situation in Hoa Hieu and has abdicated its responsibility in that area. In the southern districts, however, Quang Nam does exercise tactical command under QDSZ. As a further complication, General Lam will sometimes issue instructions directly to Quang Nam, Da Nang, or Hoa Hieu.[20]

As was true throughout I Corps, the Quang Nam CORDS organization, which worked alongside the Vietnamese province and district staffs, contained few Marines. The majority of key CORDS positions were held by active or retired Army officers. Of the three province senior advisors who served during the year,* two were active-duty Army officers and the third was a retired officer employed by AID. Most of the district senior advisors and the members of the province CORDS staff also came from the Army.[21]

III MAF and its subordinate units maintained contact with CORDS and the province government primarily through the G-5 or S-5 (Civil Affairs/Civic Action) sections of their staffs. The Marines had added this section (G-5 at MAF, division, and wing, and S-5 at regimental and battalion level) to the usual four headquarters staff sections early in the war in recognition of the close relationship between pacification and the military effort. The G-5 and S-5 officers, responsible for pacification and civil affairs, kept in close touch with the GVN and CORDS officials at the various levels of command. They attempted to fit military civic action into overall pacification plans, settled civilian damage claims against Marines, and in some instances helped to coordinate Marine operations in populated areas with those of local security forces.

Lieutenant Colonel Parker, who was PSA from January to April, recalled that among the American, Viet-

*For the development and organization of QDSZ, see Chapters 2 and 4. This was a departure from the prescribed chain of command under which province chiefs were to report directly to the MR commander. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of defense and pacification in the Da Nang Vital Area and Da Nang City.

*PSAs during 1970 were Lieutenant Colonel Warren E. Parker, USA (Ret) who had begun his tour in July 1968 and served until 24 April 1970; Lieutenant Colonel William R. Blakely, Jr., USA (Acting PSA), from April to July 1970; and Colonel John Chism, USA, from July through the end of the year. Colonel Hixson considered Chism one of the best PSAs in Vietnam. Hixson Debrief.

namese, and Korean units with which he worked on a daily basis the Marine Corps appeared to have the "clearest understanding that in a situation such as Vietnam pacification operations were as important as combat operations." He observed that "with very few exceptions, even the Vietnamese military and political leaders failed to grasp this basic, but very important, fundamental. The Vietnamese people, for very good reasons, distrusted and feated the Government of Vietnam and its military forces."[22]

Both III MAF and the 1st Marine Division kept the same G-5 officers for most of the year. At III MAF Headquarters, Colonel Cliffotd J. Peabody, who came to Vietnam from the Operations Branch, G-3 Division, at HQMC, headed the G-5 office from September 1969 through September 1970, when Major Donald E. Sudduth replaced him. The 1st Marine Division G-5, Colonel Louis S. Hollier, Jr., held his position for 11 months of 1970.* Since the division controlled most of the Marine units directly involved in security and pacification and was roughly equivalent in the chain of command to QDSZ and Quang Nam Province, Colonel Hollier became the principal liaison officer between the Marines and the GVN and CORDS authorities. According to Colonel Hixson, "Most of the work between the 1st Marine Division and the Province Senior Advisor in Quang Nam . . . is accomplished by G-5—some G-3 work, too."[23]

In February 1970, to improve coordination with other allied commands on a wide range of matters including pacification, the 1st Marine Division instituted a weekly conference of commanders and principal staff officers of the division, Quang Da Special Zone, and the 2d ROKMC Brigade. The confetence, which met at each headquarters in rotation, had as its purpose "to ensure thorough coordination and mutual understanding in planning and execution of operations and to determine procedures for approaching other areas of common interest."[24] Besides military problems, the meetings dealt with pacification-related matters such as security during GVN elections, protection of the rice harvest, military support for refugee tesettlement, and plans for civic action. The assistant division commander of the 1st Marine Division recalled that the meetings were "useful but required constant reenergizing as Vietnamese commanders changed and interest lagged."[25] With the exception of a six-week period during July and August, meetings were held almost every work day during 1970.

Besides the regular forces of the ARVN, III MAF, and the Korean Marine Brigade, the allies in Quang Nam had at their disposal the whole range of military and civilian agencies which had evolved to conduct pacification. The province and district governments were active and relatively efficient. A province Pacification and Development Council met monthly, bringing together all GVN officials concerned with the effort. The district chiefs met regularly with their village chiefs to coordinate activities. At the beginning of the year, Colonel Tin had under his command about 14,000 men of the RF and PF, organized in 52 RF companies and 177 platoons. In the judgement of their American advisors, the RF and PFs were improving steadily in military effectiveness, but they still did not have enough competent small-unit leaders, and too many of them were tied to static defensive positions. The People's Self-Defense Force boasted over 73,000 members, about 14,000 of whom were armed. In April, the Province Senior Advisor reported of the PSDF: "I have seen this program develop from nothing to a formidable, potential element . . . . In many incidents, the PSDF have been instrumental in driving the VC/NVA out of their hamlet areas."[26] The province's 4,500 members of the National Police Field Force (NPFF) and national police, formerly concentrated in the province capital and the larger towns, were now moving out into the countryside to relieve the militia in maintaining public otder. By late April, each district had its NPFF platoon, and the national police had 68 village substations in operation.

In addition to the territorials, PSDF, and police, 50 Revolutionary Development Cadre (RDC) groups were working in Quang Nam's hamlets. In units of four to eight men, these youths, recruited and trained by the centtal govetnment, were supposed to help the people organize themselves for defense and for political, economic, and social self-help. Under the operational control of the village chief, the RDC served as one of the GVN's political extensions into villages and hamlets, providing a bridge between the people and their government. The cadres varied greatly in ability and motivation, and in some parts of Quang Nam animosity existed between the RDC and the RFs and PFs, but American advisors considered the cadtes generally helpful in bringing government programs to the people.

*The 1st MAW during 1970 did not have a G-5 officer, although aviation units conducted civic action.

Quang Nam by the beginning of 1970 possessed an active Phoenix/Phung Hoang program organized at province, district, and village levels and had exceeded its VCI neutralization quotas for both 1968 and 1969. The province maintained a Chieu Hoi center at Hoi An for reception, training, and indoctrination of Communists who voluntarily surrendered. Four resettlement hamlets for former VC in the province contained over 400 families. Two GVN Armed Propaganda Companies kept teams in the field seeking out VC and relatives of VC in an effort to encourage additional desertions. To further spread the GVN's message across the province, the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO), an agency under CORDS, and the Vietnamese Information Service (VIS), were attempting to expose more Vietnamese to television, both by distributing government-purchased sets to the villages and by encouraging private buying of receivers. A relay station at Hai Van Pass allowed Quang Nam to receive broadcasts from the Vietnamese Government studios in Hue.[27]

Yet for all the efforts of all these agencies, Quang Nam in 1970 was still far from completely pacified. Of its 950,000 people, about 830,000 lived in communities rated secure or semi-secure under HES-70. Another 50,900 resided in areas considered "contested." The rest were under Viet Cong domination or in localities "not rated," which meant about the same thing. Thus, 86.7 percent of the people were supposedly under GVN control, but this figure was deceptive. Marine intelligence officers were convinced that a clandestine VC government continued to operate, even in areas relatively free of overt Communist political and military activity, and that many Viet Cong had infiltrated GVN agencies. Especially in the heavily populated districts south of Da Nang, VC guerrillas, while probably less numerous than they had been earlier in the war, still remained active and tenacious.[28]

GVN social and economic improvement efforts still left much to be desired. About 44 percent of the province's school age children, in late April 1970, were enrolled in primary schools, and the government was training new teachers and (with much help from the

Army LtGen James W. Sutherland, left, discusses with South Vietnamese pacification officials the Go Noi Island Refugee Resettlement Program. Go Noi Island, a long-time enemy strongpoint, had been cleared out and made into a refuge for displaced villagers.

Marine Corps Historical Collection

Marines) building new schools about as rapidly as additional villages were being protected from the VC. The secondary school system, however, remained ill-organized and ineffective. The province government annually announced ambitious public works plans, but delays in release of funds by the national ministries and shortages of construction equipment and skilled workers prevented completion of many projects. The amount of land under cultivation in the province had increased during 1969, with about 70 percent of the acreage devoted to rice, but land reform had made little progress due to a lack of trained administrators in the villages and hamlets. Quang Nam's social welfare program, according to the PSA, was:

> . . very poor. Little has been accomplished in care of the needy or in caring for war victims, widows, orphans, and disabled soldiers. The program in this province consists mainly of feeding the orphans, war victims, blind, and widows
> . . . . In the past this has been a token program at best. . . .[29]

Quang Nam's most distressing social problem was its large refugee population, probably the largest single refugee concentration anywhere in South Vietnam. The exact number of refugees was obscured by the peculiarities of GVN reporting. Colonel Hixson explained:

> The refugee figures that are shown as refugees . . . are official refugees who have not been paid their [GVN] refugee allowances. Once they have been paid their refugee allowances, they go in a refugee camp. They are still not back in their home. They're still a "social welfare problem. . . ."[30]

To keep the number of officially recognized refugees awaiting payment constant or declining and thus show progress to their superiors, GVN officials habitually paid some their allowances, taking them off the rolls, and then added controlled numbers of actual but hitherto unacknowledged displaced persons. As a result, while estimates of the "official refugee" population in Quang Nam ranged from 75,000 to 100,000, Colonel Peabody, the III MAF G-5, estimated the actual number of refugees as nearer 200,000.[31] GVN policy called for returning refugees to their home villages, or for upgrading long-inhabited refugee camps into permanent hamlets and villages. The allies in Quang Nam would launch ambitious resettlement projects during 1970. Even so, the size of the problem would continue to dwarf the efforts toward a solution.

In the struggle for the allegiance of the people, accurate information about how many people there were and where they lived was vital for success. In Quang Nam, the GVN lacked such information, not only about refugees, but about permanent residents. Late in 1970, in connection with the 1st Marine Division's effort to reduce harassing and interdiction fire in populated areas, Colonel Paul X. "PX" Kelley reported that in the 1st Marines TAOR:

> . . . Maps currently available are outdated and do not represent a reliable picture of local habitation. . . . The migratory habits of many Vietnamese civilians are such that they move constantly from place to place, more often than not without the knowledge of any GVN officials . . . . Many district officials can provide only vague, inconclusive estimates relative to the location of civilians, theoretically under their political cognizance.[32]

The most severe deficiencies in the pacification effort were rooted in the character of the GVN and the nature of South Vietnamese society and hence beyond III MAF's authority or capacity to remedy. Nevertheless, insofar as they could, Marines throughout Quang Nam worked to strengthen and extend pacification. Throughout 1970, with men and material diminishing as redeployment proceeded, the Marines continued and further refined pacification programs and techniques they had developed earlier in the war.

CHAPTER 8

The Struggle for Security: Combined Action

Combined Action Platoons—Reducing the Combined Action Force
Building on Success: The Combined Unit Pacification Program

Combined Action Platoons

As a military force, the Marines concerned themselves primarily with the security aspect of pacification. They devoted most of their activity to keeping enemy military units out of the villages and hamlets and to assisting the GVN in eradicating the VCI. While almost all Marines directly or indirectly took some part in this effort, those involved in the Combined Action Program had protecting the villages and hamlets from local guerrillas as their sole mission.

The Combined Action Program originated with the Marines in Vietnam and was unique to them. It had begun in 1965 when III MAF, in trying to secure the heavily populated area around Hue/Phu Bai, discovered a potential ally in the then disparaged and neglected Popular Forces. Platoons of these parttime soldiers, under command of the district chiefs, guarded particular hamlets and villages. If their deficiencies in training, weapons, and morale could be overcome, they could relieve regular Marine units of many static defensive tasks and help tear out the local roots of enemy strength.

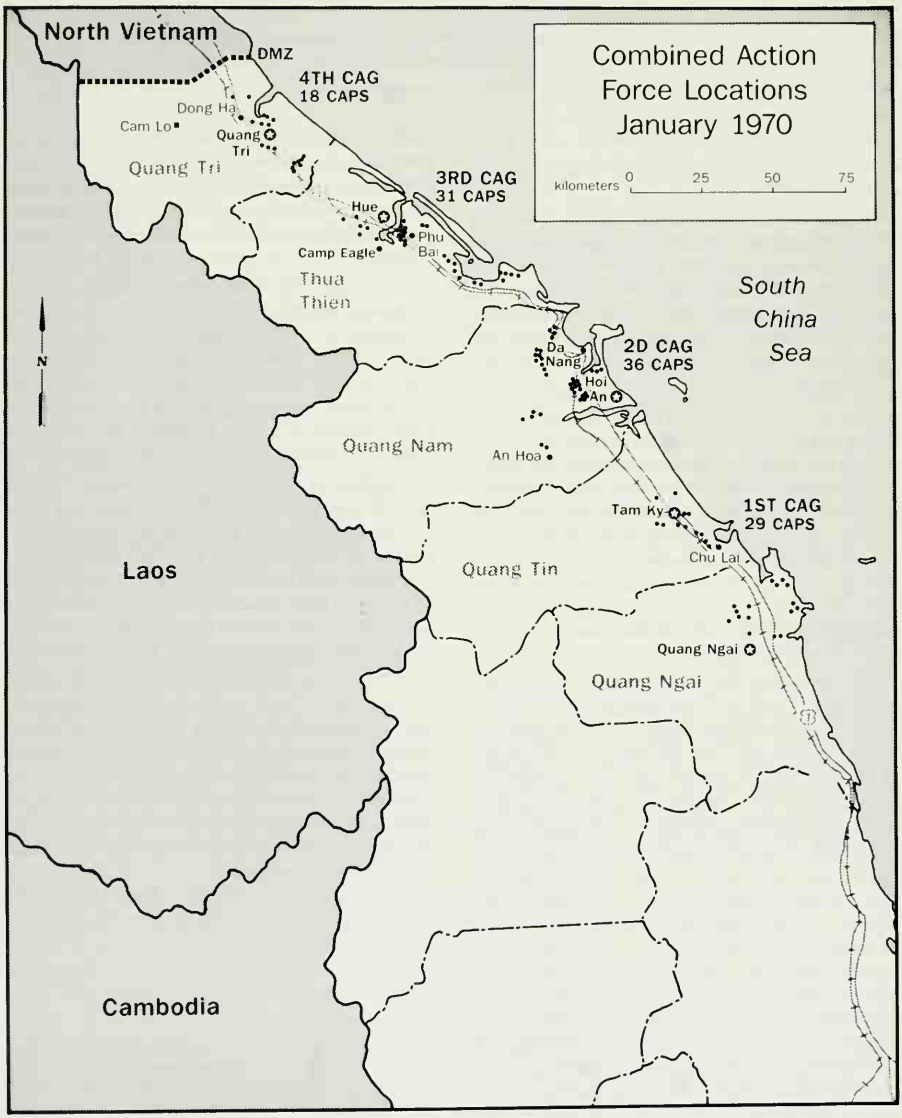
To work with the PFs, III MAF instituted the combined action platoon (CAP), consisting of a 15-man Marine rifle squad paired with a 15- to 30-man PF platoon to defend one particular village. Each element of the team strengthened the other. The Marines contributed firepower, training, and access to American medical evacuation and artillery and air support. The PFs furnished intimate knowledge of the terrain, the people, and the local VC. In the villages where they were stationed, CAPs won fights against local guerrillas and small main force detachments and drove out or killed the VC political cadres. Then, unlike conventional American and ARVN units which swept an area and moved on, the CAPs stayed and furnished the people continual protection against Viet Cong terrorism, recruiting, and taxation. As the Marines won the confidence of the villagers, the CAPs became a major source of allied intelligence, and behind the security shield they afforded, the GVN could reestablish its authority and undertake social and economic improvements. With proven success, the number of CAPs grew, and during 1966 III MAF extended the program to the Marine TAORs around Da Nang and Chu Lai. To administer the CAPs and to coordinate their activities, III MAF created combined action companies (CACOs) and then combined action groups (CAGs).

At the begining of 1970, Marine strength in the Combined Action Program had reached its peak. Four CAGs were in operation: the 1st, under Lieutenant Colonel David F. Seiler, in Quang Tin and Quang Ngai Provinces; the 2d, under Lieutenant Colonel Don R. Christensen, in Quang Nam; the 3d, under Colonel John B. Michaud, in Thua Thien; and the 4th, under Lieutenant Colonel John J. Keenan, in Quang Tri.*

In January 1970, the four CAGs consisted of a total of 42 Marine officers and 2,050 enlisted men, with two naval officers and 126 hospital corpsmen. Organized in 20 CACOs and 114 CAPs, these Americans worked with about 3,000 RF and PF soldiers. The 2d CAG in Quang Nam, largest of the four, consisted of eight CACOs with 36 CAPs and almost 700 Marine and Navy officers and men, while the smallest, the 4th in Quang Tri, had three CACOs and 18 CAPs.[1]

Until January 1970, III MAF exercised command over the four CAGs through an Assistant Chief of Staff and Director, Combined Action Program. To improve coordination and administration of the program, Lieutenant General Nickerson late in 1969 requested permission to establish a Combined Action Force (CAF), with its own headquarters under III MAF. Lieutenant General Buse, Commanding General, FMFPac, approved his request on 8 January. Three days later, III MAF formally activated the CAF, to consist of a headquarters, staffed from the combined action section of the III MAF staff, and the four CAGs with their subordinate CACOs and CAPs. The existing III MAF Direc-

*The CAGs underwent relatively few changes of command during 1970. On 5 February, Lieutenant Colonel Claude M. Daniels took over 3d CAG from Colonel Michaud, and on 18 February Major Robert D. King relieved Lieutenant Colonel Keenan at 4th CAG. Major King was relieved by Major Willis D. Ledeboer on 27 June. On 1 July, Major George N. Robillard, Jr., took over 1st CAG. CAF ComdCs, Jan-Sep70.


North Vietnam
DMZ
4TH CAG
18 CAPS
Dong Ha
Cam Lo
Quang Tri
Quang Tri
3RD CAG
31 CAPS
Hue
Phu Bai
Camp Eagle
Thua Thien
South China Sea
Da Nang
2D CAG
36 CAPS
Hoi An
N
Quang Nam
An Hoa
Tam Ky
1ST CAG
29 CAPS
Chu Lai
Laos
Quang Tin
Quang Ngai
Quang Ngai
Cambodia
Combined Action Force Locations January 1970
kilometers 0 25 50 75

Marine Corps Historical Collection

LtGen Henry W. Buse, Jr., Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific inspects Marines and Popular Force troops of Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, one of the newly formed integrated CUPP (Combined Unit Pacification Program) companies.

tor, Colonel Theodore E. Metzger, became commanding officer of Headquarters and Service Company, III MAF, which continued to provide administrative and logistic support, while the 5th Communications Battalion handled the CAFs communications needs. Colonel Metzger was also charged with conducting the CAF School for training new CAP Marines and the CAF Vietnamese Language School.[2]

On 26 March, after XXIV Corps became the senior U.S. headquarters in I Corps, III MAF transferred operational control of the CAF to XXIV Corps, while retaining administrative control. Since the CAF still had CAPs deployed throughout ICTZ, this change was necessary to assure effective support of the CAPs by the U.S. Army and ARVN. The shift of command had little effect on the day-to-day operations of CAP Marines and PFs. Indeed, Lieutenant General Zais, the XXIV Corps commander, on 3 May, declared that the "organization, deployment, training, administration, and combat operation of the CAF were to continue as previously ordered by CG, III MAF . . . ." Colonel Metzger remained in command of the CAP until 9 July, when he was replaced by Colonel Ralph F. Estey, who had just completed a tour as commanding officer of the 5th Marines.[3]

In the field, the CAPs operated under a complex chain of command which reflected their unique character and mission. The Marines assigned to CAPs were commanded by the CAF through the CAGs and CACOs, while the PFs were responsible in theory to their village chief but in practice usually took orders from their district chief and through him from province and I Corps. Each CAG headquarters, usually located near a province headquarters, provided administrative support to the CACOs under it, trained both Marines and PFs, and, in consultation with province chiefs and regular unit commanders, assigned CAP areas of operation. The CACO headquarters, the counterpart of the Vietnamese district in the command structure, arranged for artillery and air support, evacuation of casualties, and reinforcement for its CAPs with the district and with the U.S., ARVN, or

Korean infantry battalion in its vicinity. Operational control of each CAP unit of Marines and PFs rested with the Vietnamese district (subsector) commander.

By mutual agreement, the province chief, the CAG commander, and the commander of the regular battalion operating in the area assigned each CAP a tactical area of coordination (TAOC), normally encompassing a single village. The TAOC was considered the exclusive territory of the CAP, and non-CAP units were not supposed to enter it without previous permission of the district and CACO commanders. Within each CAP, the Marine squad leader and the PF sergeant, or *trung-si*,* neither of whom had command over the other, directed operations by consultation and agreement.

If a dispute arose which the Marine squad leader or *trung-si* could not resolve, each had to refer it to a higher level of his own chain of command. This awkward system depended for effectiveness almost entirely on trust and respect between the Marines and PF leaders.[4] While the system worked well generally, Marine small-unit leaders did not hesitate to take charge. Looking back on his experience as commander of the CAF, Colonel Metzger observed that "when push came to shove, the Marines had to assume direct command and frequently did so, particularly when critical situations developed . . . the agreed chain of command was not often a major problem." Metzger suggested that in most cases Marines asserted themselves with the compliance of the Vietnamese. He emphasized, however, that when Marines had to, "at all levels," they took command.[5]

In mid-March, just before XXIV Corps took operational control of the Combined Action Force, a CORDS study group which had been reviewing the Combined Action Program proposed to Lieutenant General Zais that the CAPs be "integrated into CORDS." The study group claimed that at the village level, the CAP PFs' tendency to look to the district for direction undermined the authority of the village chief, and that the CAF, CAGs, and CACOs duplicated many functions of province and district senior advisors, thus weakening single management of American support for territorial security. Colonel Metzger in reply argued against transfer of control of the CAPs to CORDS. He pointed out that the CAPs still were tactical units engaged in combat operations and the CORDS "possesses no . . . capability to direct or support military operations." His view prevailed. The CAF remained separate from CORDS under overall control of XXIV Corps.[6]

During 1970 the CAF received most of its Marines directly from training centers and staging battalions in the United States, although it continued to accept a few volunteers from other Marine units in Vietnam. Most Marines assigned to the CAF from the United States were not volunteers, but they had to have high general classification test scores and records free of recent disciplinary action. In Vietnam, the CAF Headquarters possessed and exercised the right to screen and reject incoming replacements. Those rejected were sent to other III MAF units. In some drafts, the CAF refused up to 50-55 percent of the men, most of them for medical or disciplinary reasons, but the usual rejection rate was 20-25 percent.

Colonel Metzger gave particular care to the selection of NCOs for the critical position of CAP squad leader. He said:

> . . . I personally interviewed every sergeant that came into the CAF. I would say that the majority—and I'm making a conservative estimate—the majority we rejected. We rejected them usually because they simply did not, based on interview, have the leadership . . . capabilities. This would be evidenced in terms of record, in terms of motivation, in terms of their own willingness to make the effort . . . .[7]

Once they had arrived in Vietnam and been accepted by the CAF, CAP-bound Marines spent about two weeks at the Combined Action Force School in East Da Nang before joining their units. There they received refresher training in basic infantry weapons, small-unit tactics, first aid, and map and compass reading. They attended classes on the use of war dogs, and learned how to request and control artillery fire, air strikes, and medical evacuation flights. They also studied Vietnamese language, history, and culture, GVN politics, and the history and organization of the PF, and received about six hours of instruction in VC and VCI organization, weapons, and tactics. During the two-week school, CAP Marines received 53 hours of instruction in general military subjects and 38 hours in Vietnamese subjects. Another 18 hours were consumed with examinations, critiques, and reviews. For practical experience, CAF school students, with local PFs, conducted night security patrols around the CAF Headquarters compound. Many Marines returned to Da Nang during their CAP tours for 28 days of in-

*PFs had no formal rank structure, and their leaders were simply designated by village and district chiefs. No organization for the PF existed beyond the platoon, which theoretically numbered 30 men.

tensive instruction in Vietnamese at the CAF Language School.[8]

Throughout most of the year, as redeployments and changes in the flow of replacements disrupted the personnel "pipeline," the CAF operated at less than full strength. According to Colonel Metzger:

> Our T/O [for a CAP] was 15 to include a corpsman. Much of the time I was there we operated at about a 9.5 level, which meant that we were at least a third understrength, continually, and which meant more specifically . . . that instead of, say, putting out three night activities, or three night ambushes in each CAP, we could only put out two, or maybe one . . . While I was there, no solution was found.[9]

The manpower shortage created a number of interrelated problems for the Combined Action Force. Even to keep nine men per CAP in the field, the CAGs often had to reduce their already inadequate headquarters staffs and rotate men between CACOs. Lacking enough qualified senior NCOs, in early 1970 the CAF had to place over one-third of its CAPs under corporals or lance corporals, some hardly out of their teens and few with previous Vietnam combat experience. Because few Marines could be spared from the field for the extra training, the CAF had a chronic shortage of men fluent in Vietnamese. Fortunately, enough PFs had learned some English during five years of contact with Americans to permit at least basic communication within the CAPs.[10]

During 1970, the CAPs continued to perform the seven missions assigned them in earlier years. These were: to neutralize the VCI in the village or hamlet; to provide security and help maintain law and order; to protect local GVN authorities; to guard important facilities and lines of communication within the village and hamlet; to conduct combined operations with other allied forces; to participate in civic action and psychological operations; and to assist in economic and social development. The Marine element of the CAP had the additional mission "to provide military training to the PF soldiers in order to prepare them to effectively perform the [seven regular] missions . . . when the Marine element is relocated."[11]

A Marine member of Combined Action Platoon 2-5-3 demonstrates to his Vietnamese counterparts the breaking down of an M60 machine gun. The training of the Popular Force troops was one of the primary missions of the Combined Action Marines.

Abel Papers, Marine Corps Historical Center

Abel Papers, Marine Corps Historical Center

Members of a mobile combined action platoon have stopped in a friendly village where they are the dinner guests of one of the village elders. The platoon does not remain in any one hamlet but moves throughout its assigned area from village to village.

Throughout 1970, the CAPs accomplished their security mission primarily by continual day and night patrolling and by setting ambushes in and around their assigned villages. By the middle of the year, almost all units of the CAF had adopted the "Mobile CAP" concept of operations. This meant that the CAPs abandoned the fortified compounds from which they usually had worked in the past. The compounds, Marines had found, tied down too much of the combined platoon in defending a fixed position, thus weakening the screen around the village and offering the VC comparatively easy access to the people. Also, the compound itself offered enemy local and main forces an attractive target for attack, and several "compound CAPs" had been overrun and all but annihilated.*

Colonel Metzger recalled that after he was assigned as commander of the CAF several CAPs were either overrun or badly mauled. In some cases the losses resulted from Vietnamese treachery. At this point he realized that a static CAP compound was too easy a target, and the decision was made to go "mobile." Metzger said, "It was darned tough on the CAP Marines, but it saved many lives and greatly enhanced our security capability. Under this regimen, CAP Marines literally went to the bush for their entire tours." When the change was made, only a couple of CAPs remained in compounds and then only because of the necessity to safeguard radio gear which "would only operate from certain terrain features."

The CAPs now moved daily from place to place among the hamlets, keeping no position more permanent than a patrol base. During May and June, the 4th CAG abandoned even those; its CAPs kept their radios and other heavy equipment at village chiefs' headquarters, or non-CAP territorial force compounds. As far as possible, all the Marines and PFs remained continually active on patrols or night ambushes. This tactic allowed a CAP to screen a larger area more effectively with the same number of men, and it kept the VC uncertain of the CAP's whereabouts and hence less likely to try to enter the village to attack the CAP or to extort supplies and recruits from the people. It also conformed to the GVN policy of assigning a more mobile, aggressive role to the RF and PF while the PSDF took over the task of guarding bridges, village

*For a vivid description of a VC/NVA assault on a CAP compound see Francis J. West, Jr., *The Village* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), pp. 105-127.

offices, and other installations. Colonel Metzger summed up:

> . . . With its mobility, the CAP can keep the VC guessing . . . They don't like to come after you unless they've had a chance to get set and do some planning. Mobility throws this off. It . . . means that the CAP can be found anywhere outside a village or hamlet, and they don't like this when they're trying to come in for rice, or money, or recruits, or just plain coordination.[12]

While patrols and ambushes occupied most of their time, CAP units also took part in other types of operations. They often worked with Regional and Popular Forces or with U.S. or ARVN regular units to cordon and search villages. Sometimes, one or more CAPs conducted an offensive sweep outside their TAOCs. During April, for example, units of the 1st CAG began sweeping areas which Americal Division or ARVN units had just left, in order to engage enemy units coming back after evading the earlier allied operations. CAPs relied for protection primarily on their organic weapons and on their mobility, but they could and did call for artillery and air support when they needed it. During March, for example, units of the 2d CAG called in 23 artillery fire missions and seven mortar fire missions. They used helicopter gunships twice and requested and controlled 26 medical evacuations for Vietnamese civilians, PFs, and wounded Marines.[13]

When General McCutcheon assumed command of III MAF and was briefed on the CAF situation, he expressed concern to Colonel Metzger over the casualties the CAF had sustained through 1969. "I answered by saying that our experience had taught us that to survive in many CAP TAORs, CAPs had to patrol aggressively," said Metzger, adding, however, that General McCutcheon had an arguable point, given the casualty figures. In 1969, the CAF had killed 1,952 VC/NVA, took 391 POWs, and captured 932 weapons. CAP losses included 111 Marines and 6 Navy corpsmen killed and 851 wounded, over 50 percent of whom were evacuated for wounds. The CAF, nevertheless, remained committed to an aggressive operational mode.

The CAPs' mobile tactics produced results. Throughout most of the year, units of the CAF conducted an average of 12,000 to 14,000 patrols and ambushes per month, about 70 percent of them at night. They took a steady toll of enemy dead and prisoners in brief firefights, over two-thirds of which, according to Colonel Metzger, were CAP-initiated. In the first three months of 1970 alone, the CAF accounted for 288 enemy killed and 87 prisoners, rounded up 487 VC suspects, received 82 Hoi Chanhs, and captured 172 weapons. In the same period, the CAF lost 22 Marines and 42 PFs killed and 165 Marines and 122 PFs wounded. The 1st and 2d CAGs in southern I Corps, where VC guerrillas were both numerous and active, had most of the contacts and inflicted and absorbed most of the casualties. The 3d and 4th CAGs, in more thinly populated northern I Corps where the main enemy threat came from the NVA, saw less action.[14]

CAF units devoted much attention to training the PFs working with them. In the field, most training occurred during combat operations, with the PFs learning from the example and the informal instruction of their Marine counterparts. As a CAF fact sheet put it, the CAP Marine's "classroom was in the 'bush' where the VC provide necessary training aids."[15]

Each CAG also provided formal instruction for both Marines and PFs. The 4th CAG, for example, brought two entire CAPs each week from their villages to the CAG Headquarters compound. There, the members, Marines and PFs together, received a one-day marksmanship course followed by a medical examination and, if necessary, treatment, a hot dinner, and a movie. The 3d CAG conducted similar refresher training for individual Marines and PFs. When a shortage of Marines forced cancellation of this program in March, 3d CAG established a mobile training team of one Vietnamese lieutenant and one Marine sergeant which travelled from CAP to CAP for the rest of the year.[16] To further assist the Marines and Vietnamese in forming more proficient CAPs, General Lam began phasing some CAP PFs through the full ARVN basic training program at the ARVN training base near Hue.

The CAGs provided periodic refresher courses for the CAP Marines about particular weapons or tactics. They paid careful attention to the Marine CAP leaders because, as Colonel Metzger put it:

> . . . If you have a good, strong CAP leader—strong in all respects, you have a good, strong *trung-si*, because they learn by sort of a process of osmosis, and observation, and emulation, and I saw this happen time after time. We all commented on this. This isn't to say that a weak CAP leader couldn't start with a strong *trung-si*, but it wasn't long before he was down to . . . the Marine's level . . . .[17]

With so many inexperienced young corporals and lance corporals leading CAPs, CACO and CAG commanders had to spend much time, in the words of one of them, "establishing a close relationship with this kid and checking him daily, and I don't mean inspect-

ing him. I mean visiting him and finding out what his problems were . . . ."[18] Both to train and to counsel squad leaders, the 3d CAG during May instituted monthly CAP leaders' seminars. At these sessions, CAP NCOs, brought to CAG Headquarters from the field, spent most of a day undergoing instruction in various subjects and talking over common problems. They also enjoyed lunch and an opportunity for "a little socializing with contemporaries."[19]

In both formal and informal training, the Marines emphasized PF self-sufficiency. All the CAGs tried to teach PF leaders and selected soldiers such skills as use and care of the M60 machine gun, 60mm mortar, and AN/PRC-25 radio. They attempted to qualify PFs to act as artillery forward observers and to call for and direct artillery fire missions, air strikes, and medical evacuations. Modifying a long-standing requirement that all CAP operations involve both Marines and PFs, the Marines encouraged PF *trung-sis* to plan and execute their own all-PF patrols and ambushes.[20]

The success of this training in enabling the PF to fight their own battles varied from province to province, even from CAP to CAP. By early 1970, many CAPs in Quang Tin, where the Americal Division,* 2d ARVN Division, RFs, and PFs now formed a relatively strong military network, had worked themselves out of a job. In this province, an increasing number of village chiefs had begun asserting effective control over PF operations. Many PFs, according to Lieutenant Colonel Seiler, the 1st CAG commander, were showing "interest and ability" in the use of 60mm mortars and M60 machine guns. Seiler reported that in some CAPs, the PFs "do not want the Marines to go on patrols and ambushes, but rather want them to stay in the patrol base or night defensive positions as a react[ion] force or fire support and medevac coordinators."[21]

In Seiler's opinion, Vietnamization in the province was working fairly well and the local forces increasingly wanted to assert themselves. This, as Seiler pointed out, restricted the CAP Marines' role to the degree that they weren't permitted to perform as their charter directed, hence necessitating Seiler's decision to encourage the progress of Vietnamization, and to move CAP Marines to areas where they were more needed. He characterized this important change in Quang Tin Province in a 1st CAG letter in April 1970:

> . . . CAPs in Quang Tin Province are developing a go-it-alone capability. The Marine squad leaders have been taking a less dominant role in operations and have been emphasizing Vietnamese capabilities. The major problem occurs when the CAP passes the line of equal partnership in a joint venture and it becomes a predominantly Vietnamese operation. We are faced with a paradox of encouraging Vietnamese participation and control but still requiring Marines to follow certain operating principles such as mobility, active patrolling over a wide area, a specific number of activities and a minimum size of forces. These are all sound procedures and must be adhered to for U.S. units but are considered less important in the overall scheme of operations for Vietnamese units. It is not desirable to attempt to have Vietnamese forces conform to our operating principles after they have demonstrated their ability to handle their own security problems. Rather, it is recommended that the Marine component of the CAP continue to be withdrawn when the need for its services has diminished to the point that the Vietnamese forces can satisfactorily do the job on their own. It should not be a CAP mission, however, to remain in the AO to serve primarily as fire support coordinator."[22]

In other provinces, where the Regional and Popular Forces were less assertive and the VC stronger, the Vietnamese remained more dependent on their Marine counterparts, but throughout I Corps CAP training improved PF performance. During the first quarter of 1970, for example, the CAP PF platoons, representing about 12 percent of the total number of PFs in I Corps, accounted for about 29 percent of the enemy killed by PFs and 40 percent of the weapons captured.[23]

During daylight hours, CAP Marines spent much of their time on civic action—helping the villagers to improve their daily lives. The Navy corpsmen assigned to the CAPs held periodic sick calls, known as "medcaps." They gathered the people together for treatment of minor hurts and illnesses, examined the more serious cases, and when possible called for helicopters to take them to U.S. or Vietnamese hospitals. The corpsmen also taught personal hygiene, and trained Vietnamese volunteers in basic first aid and sanitation. CAP riflemen distributed food, clothing, building materials, and school supplies obtained from the U.S. and Vietnamese Governments and from private charities. They also helped the villagers repair and construct dwellings, roads, paddy dikes, schools, public showers, toilets, bridges, and other facilities for com-

*Years later, Major General Lloyd B. Ramsey, USA, who commanded the Americal Division until the spring of 1970, discussed the success in Quang Tin Province containing the VC: "The weakness of the VC was a direct result of the Americal Division, 2d ARVN Division, RFs, PFs, Province Chiefs, CAPs, all under the supervision of III MAF and supported by Marine, Navy, and AF air support. A fine team effort. Also, we received outstanding support from naval gunfire." MajGen Lloyd B. Ramsey, USA, Comments on draft ms, 2Jun83 (Vietnam Comment File).

munity betterment. In all such projects, the Marines were supposed to emphasize local self-help, with the villagers identifying the needs to be met and providing most of the labor while the Marines furnished additional workers, materials, and technical skill. Nevertheless, as they had throughout the existence of the Combined Action Program, CAPs continued to give civic action second priority to combat operations. They did so on the theory that the people would be won to the allied cause primarily by providing security rather than through charitable works. Benevolence without protection would not produce real pacification.[24]

Civic action activities during 1970 as conducted by CAPs were given even less priority because of the effects of redeployment. "As in-country U.S. units in I Corps had to extend their TAORs to compensate for redeployment of the 3d Marine Division and the 26th Marines in late 1969," recalled Colonel Metzger, "the job of village security became much tougher for the CAPs. . . . I remember by early 1970 that we had CACOs in 2d CAG in contact every night as the VC and NVA tried to exploit the reduced major units' presence. For this reason, our civic action efforts were much reduced. The troops simply couldn't do both as the threat intensified."[25]

By 1970, the Combined Action Program had been in operation for five years. While most observers agreed that it was succeeding in its primary mission of improving local security, the program did have problems and shortcomings, some inherent in its nature, others the result of current circumstances. For example, Colonel Metzger complained that the CACO headquarters needed two officers rather than the one usually assigned. He explained that "One officer simply cannot hack it, not when it comes to investigations, resupply, tactical supervision of the CAPs, fire support coordination. Then you lay all this on top of the time-space factor, and he just can't hack it."[26]

Marines in and out of the CAF agreed that the requirement that line units obtain both CACO and district approval before entering a CAP TAOC often prevented allied battalions from effectively exploiting current intelligence. In an effort to solve this problem, Lieutenant Colonel John J. Tolnay, who took command of the 2d CAG late in September, reached an informal agreement with Colonel Kelley of the 1st Marines, in whose TAOR most of Tolany's CAPs were located. Tolnay recalled:

> We got this straightened out pretty well with the 1st Marines. Colonel Kelley and I sat down and talked . . . and I said, "Welcome aboard. Any time you want to come through, just let us know because we do have to coordinate just like any other infantry unit."[27]

In a further effort to improve working relationships with the 2d CAG, the 1st Marines began assigning its rifle companies to operate regularly with particular CACOs and designating particular squads to cooperate with individual CAPs.[28]

Lieutenant Colonel Tolnay felt that much more could have been done in exploiting the CAPs as intelligence sources:

> . . . We had a great intelligence-gathering potential that was not exploited efficiently. Because we were co-located with the distrtict, we maintained a joint COC with the district headquarters, we were privy to all the intelligence that they gathered . . . and we had the pulse of the people. . . . We tried to feed this information up to battalion, but the communication links weren't that good because it meant having to wait till the next day to get it to them because we weren't on the same net and we didn't have telephone communication.[29]

CAP Marines were generally able to establish at least minimally harmonious working relationships with the PFs, but difficulties remained. Many of the PFs were reluctant to attend formal training sessions, particularly classes held during the day after they had spent the night patrolling. Some PFs had to be coerced to operate outside villages and hamlets at night. Sergeant Tom Harvey, who commanded CAP 3-3-5 located just west of Hue, years later remembered the frustration of trying to motivate the PFs to patrol outside of their fixed positions, especially at night. "Our PFs still refused to have the main body of their platoon in a night position outside of the hamlet," said Harvey. Only his Hoi Chanh, who had been abducted by the VC when he was 15 and who hated the VC, readily participated.[30]

The PFs, and the village and district chiefs who controlled them, also responded unenthusiastically to Marine efforts to introduce mobile* tactics. Often, when CAP Marines were shifted to other villages, the PFs

*"I think nearly everyone interested in the matter now recognizes the advantages of the mobile CAP, as opposed to those bound to fixed bases or compounds," said Sergeant Tom Harvey, leader of CAP 3-3-5. "I would certainly agree, and can only surmise that we would have been much more effective at Delta-1 in 2d CAG [the CAP in which Harvey served in 1968] if we had been mobile. The area was much more heavily populated with several hamlets in our AO, and would have been better suited to a mobile mode of operation than our AOs in 3d CAG. . . ." Tom Harvey, Comments on draft ms, 16Jan84 (Vietnam Comment File).

would return to their old habit of staying in compounds or other fixed positions. The general lack of mobility by PFs usually resulted from "village pressure to keep the PFs close in to afford maximum personal security for the village and hamlet officials."[31]

Occasionally, CAP Marines became embroiled in local Vietnamese feuds. During February, for example, Marines of CAP 4-2-1 in Quang Tri had a firefight with a non-CAP PF platoon guarding a bridge at the edge of their TAOC. The non-CAP PFs, strangers to the district, continually harassed and abused CAP PFs and villagers. On 21 February, when the Marines intervened to protect a soft-drink vendor, the hostile PFs opened fire on them, slightly wounding the CAP leader. The Marines returned fire, and a noisy exchange ensued, although a 4th CAG investigation later concluded that "both sides used restraint in the firing, since at the short range involved great harm could have been inflicted if the volume of fire was heavy or aimed accurately." The only casualty besides the CAP leader was a PF wounded in the chin by a grenade fragment. The CACO commander and the Vietnamese district S-3 hurried to the scene and stopped the firing, and the district soon moved the offending PFs to another village. "Fortunately," the 4th CAG report of the incident concluded, "the friendly relations between the CAP Marines, CAP PFs, and villagers in the CAP 4-2-1 AO were not harmed . . . ."[32]

More menacing to CAP Marines than such sporadic hostility was the possibility that their Vietnamese counterparts were actually VC or had reached an accommodation with the VC. More than one CAP found itself trying to defend a village where the chief or the PF *trung-si* was working for the enemy. On 12 January, for example, the Marine squad leader of CAP 4-1-5, located in a village northwest of Dong Ha in Quang Tri Province, observed the PF platoon leader "apparently disclosing information about night locations to unauthorized individuals." The Marine summoned other Vietnamese authorities, and they arrested the PF, whom they had suspected for some time of being a Viet Cong.[33]

A CAP in the 2d CAG had a worse experience. At 2015 on 8 July, Marines on watch at the CP of Company H, 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, heard an explosion and small arms fire from the nearby village of Binh Ky. Located about a mile and three-quarters south of Marble Mountain, Binh Ky was defended by CAP 2-7-5. The Marines at the CP of Company H tuned in on the CAP's radio frequency and heard a call for a medical evacuation helicopter and a report that the CAP was in heavy contact. The company at once sent a squad to aid the CAP. By the time the squad reached the CAP's position in Binh Ky, the fight had ended and the Company H Marines found five dead and four wounded Marines from the CAP squad, along with four wounded PFs. The CAP had exhausted its ammunition, and the surviving PFs, completely demoralized, refused to join the Company H squad in a sweep of the village. The area of the fight contained a number of craters, all of which were later determined to have been caused by buried, command-detonated mines. The Marines from Company H helped the remnants of the CAP guard the village for the rest of the night.

Later, the 1st Marines' intelligence officer pieced together the story behind these confused events. He reported:

> . . . Binh Ky's village chief was a VC and had been prosecuted a couple of times and exonerated. The Vietnamese RF or PF there we felt sure had reached some sort of agreement with the VC, if they weren't in fact VC themselves. The hamlet chiefs there were VC or at least frightened by the VC to the point where they'd do anything the VC told them to do. The Marines in the CAP were in a difficult situation. Their activities each night . . . tended to establish a pattern and they never made contact. We never had any trouble with Binh Ky. The reason we never had any trouble was because they [the VC] wanted to keep it quiet. One night the CAP commander was able to break the pattern of activity with his Vietnamese counterparts and get them to set up ambushes on the other side of town in sort of an unknown pattern. . . . They got hit . . . a couple of Marines were wounded and some PFs were killed. It was sort of a slap on the wrist . . . .[34]

In spite of continuing problems, most Marines in 1970 remained convinced of the overall success of the Combined Action Program. In Thua Thien Province, for example, Sergeant Tom Harvey later observed that "we managed to keep the VC out of all the hamlets in Phu Thu District, in which six CAPs operated, with a force of probably no more than 75 Marines, including our CACO headquarters."[35]

Evidence was plentiful that in most villages where they were stationed, the CAP Marines enjoyed a large measure of acceptance, even trust and affection, from the Vietnamese. Time after time, villagers volunteered information which led to the capture of enemy soldiers and equipment. The enemy seemed to avoid CAP-protected villages. In the 2d CAG AO, for instance, it became possible in many hamlets to hold GVN political rallies at night, a thing unheard of in earlier

years. At times, the Vietnamese openly expressed appreciation for the Marines. During the flood in October, the CAPs and their Vietnamese counterparts, as well as the villagers themselves, were evacuated to LZ Baldy. Lieutenant Colonel Tolnay recalled that the Vietnamese returned to CAP villages about two days before the Marines, then added:

> When the Marines returned by helicopter, the village elders and the people were there to greet them and lead them back into their houses where they had food prepared for them, because they really appreciated the fact that Marines were coming back to protect them . . . .[36]

Since the inception of the program in 1965, a total of 93 CAPs had been moved to new locations from villages and hamlets deemed able to protect themselves. Of the former CAP hamlets, none ever had returned to Viet Cong control, at least not as measured in the American HES. Some former CAP villages had achieved a measure of prosperity and stability.[37]

The village of Binh Nghia, a seven-hamlet complex about four miles south of Chu Lai, by 1970 offered a striking example of CAP success. A CAP had been established there in 1966, finding the community under strong VC influence and its GVN leaders and PFs demoralized. For two years, the CAP Marines, aided by increasingly aggressive and confident PFs, fought a savage battle against local guerrillas. During the struggle, the CAP compound was overrun and half the Marine members of the combined platoon killed. The survivors, their ranks filled by replacements, held on and gradually gained the military upper hand and the respect of the villagers. By 1970, the VC rarely entered Binh Nghia, either to fight or to collect taxes. The Marine CAP had moved elsewhere, and the GVN, which regarded the village as pacified, had even transferred the PF platoon to another village. Binh Nghia, now protected by a 100-man People's Self Defense Force, had an active, elected local government and a flourishing economy (by Vietnamese village standards). It seemed to an American visitor who knew the village well that "the war had passed Binh Nghia."[38]*

*For the earlier fight for Binh Nghia, see Jack Shulimson, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam, 1966: An Expanding War* (Washington: Hist&MusDiv, 1982), pp. 241-43, and West, *The Village*. It should be noted that from the start Binh Nghia had contained a large pro-GVN element and had had a strong local GVN leader. Much of the rest of the population had been willing to support whomever seemed to them the winning side. It had never been a hardcore VC village, but hardcore VC villages were comparatively few in most areas, and communities like Binh Nghia provided much of what the VC needed to maintain and expand their strength.

Reducing the Combined Action Force

Beginning in late 1969, the question of when and how rapidly to reduce the Combined Action Force came under consideration in Marine Corps redeployment planning. The Marines decided early that the CAF should be reduced—by deactivations of platoons and redeployment of personnel—at a pace roughly proportional to that of the withdrawal of other Marine units.

This stand was based on several considerations. The number of Marines in the CAF counted as part of the total number of men III MAF could have in-country. Hence, as the authorized manpower ceiling was lowered by redeployments, failure to reduce the CAF would force a too-rapid decrease in conventional strength. Combined action units depended on conventional forces for artillery and air support and reinforcement against major attacks, and the Marines preferred not to have to rely entirely on the U.S. Army and the ARVN for such assistance. Accordingly, as other Marine units came out, III MAF decided the CAPs they supported should also come out. Finally, Lieutenant General Nickerson, the III MAF commander, emphasized the need for close and constant supervision of the CAPs by higher Marine headquarters. Without such supervision, Nickerson feared, discipline in these isolated, independent small units would decline and with it effectiveness. As he bluntly put it, "these damn Marines, they go bamboo on you, . . . unless you can get out there and kick ass, take names, and be sure they're up to snuff . . . ."[39]

On the basis of these considerations, the Marines wanted to begin reducing the CAF early in the deployment process. They held to this position in spite of the fact that the U.S. Army had no comparable organization* with which to replace the CAPs and in spite of great ARVN reluctance to lose these particular Marines. Typifying the ARVN reaction to possible CAP deactivations, General Ngo Quang Truong, the competent commander of the 1st ARVN Division in Quang Tri, accepted the inevitable redeployment of

*The U.S. Army and the ARVN never formed CAP-type units. The closest U.S. Army equivalent was the Mobile Advisory Team (MAT), of which the Army would have 487 in operation by late 1970, 88 of them in I Corps. Each MAT consisted of two American officers, three enlisted men, and a ARVN interpreter. Each team was assigned a specific working area throughout which it travelled giving small-unit training to RFs and PFs. MACV ComdHist, 70, II, Ch. 7, p. 67; Gen W. C. Westmoreland, USA, and Adm U. S. G. Sharp, USN, *Report on the War in Vietnam* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1968), p. 215.

Marine units but pleaded with Brigadier General Dulacki, Nickerson's Chief of Staff, "I don't care what else you do, but please don't take the CAPs."[40]

The Marines still intended to take the CAPs and sought and obtained MACV's permission to do so. On 31 December 1969, Lieutenant General Nickerson requested guidance from General Abrams on redeployment of the CAPs in Phase IV, which at that time was expected to remove all Marines but the residual MAB. Abrams, in reply, left it to III MAF to determine how many CAP Marines to withdraw in Phase IV and how many to retain with the MAB and he promised to send more MATs to I Corps to take over part of the CAPs' training task. Nickerson, on 28 January, with the approval of FMFPac and HQMC, proposed to MACV the deactivation of the 1st, 3d, and 4th CAGs during Phase IV. The 2d CAG in Quang Nam, reduced to about 600 Marines, was to remain until the MAB pulled out. MACV approved the proposal. Even though the total number of Marines to be withdrawn in Phase IV was later reduced, this plan for cutting down the CAF remained in effect. Throughout 1970, the CAF gradually reduced its manpower and the number of its units in the field and concentrated its forces in Quang Nam.[41]

Consoldiation of the CAF began on 9 February, when the 2d CAG deactivated the headquarters of CACO 2-5 and distributed its remaining two CAPs to CACOs 2-1 and 2-7. On 28 April, Lieutenant General Lam and Lieutenant General Zais, at the recommendation of Lieutenant General McCutcheon, the new III MAF commander, agreed to move five CAPs from the 3d CAG and two from the 4th CAG to 2d CAG. CAF Headquarters had been urging this shift of strength for some time, but General Lam, who had to give final approval to any CAP relocation, had been unwilling to act until the threat of a Communist 1970 Tet offensive had abated.* The seven CAPs were withdrawn from the field on 29 April. Between 3 and 5 May, they occupied new TAOCs in Hoa Vang, Dien Ban, and Hieu Nhon Districts in Quang Nam. This reinforcement enlarged the 2d CAG to over 700 Marines.[42]

In mid-April, while plans for reducing the 3d and 4th CAGs were being completed, Lieutenant Colonel Seiler of the 1st CAG suggested to Vietnamese officials in Quang Tin that four CAPs be deactivated. General Lam, the ultimate authority agreed. The Marines of these CAPs, stationed in areas where the PF were now operating independently, had been reduced to the the roles of mobile reserves and fire support coordinators. The four CAPs were disbanded during the last days of May in the first actual deactivation of CAP platoons since 1967. During May, the the 1st CAG obtained permission to deactivate nine more CAPs and the two CACOs controlling them, again because the PFs no longer needed their support and because no other villages in Quang Tin could make use of them. Accordingly, between 24 and 29 June, CACOs 1-1 (four CAPs) and 1-2 (five CAPs) were disbanded.[43]*

Reduction of the CAF speeded up in July, spurred by an almost complete halt of the flow of replacements for CAP Marines.** Between 7 and 30 July, the CAG deactivated the group headquarters, four CACOs, and 16 remaining CAPs of the 4th CAG, thereby terminating the Combined Action Program in Quang Tri. During the same period, it deactivated two CACO headquarters and 14 CAPs from the 3d CAG and five more CAPs from the 1st CAG. Most of the Marines from deactivated units in 3d and 4th CAGs were transferred within the CAF. The CAF thus lost more units than men in this reduction. Nevertheless, by the end of July, the total number of Marines in the CAF had declined to about 1,700.[44]

During July and August, as an increasing number of line units stood down for redeployment in Keystone Robin Alpha, the CAF deactivated the remaining CACOs and CAPs of the 1st and 3d CAGs. The last company of the 1st CAG disbanded on 24 August, followed on 28 August by the last CACO of the 3d CAG. Marines from these units returned to the United States or joined other commands in the Western Pacific. On 7 September, 3d CAG Headquarters closed down, and six days later 1st CAG headquarters ended operations. The 2d CAG meanwhile deactivated

*The procedure for moving a CAP from one village to another was laborious and highly centralized. Approval had to be obtained from every level of Vietnamese officialdom up to I Corps, and requests for transfers required elaborate documentation and certification that the local forces could take care of themselves. See Consul Francis T. McNamara, Political Advisor to CG XXIV Corps, ltr to LtGen Melvin Zais, dtd 14Mar70, in CAF SOP & History Fldr, Box 2, Pacification Study Docs.

*Since the Combined Action Force was not part of the regular Marine Corps T/O, its units were deactivated rather than redeployed. Marines from CAPs either returned to the U.S. with other redeployed formations or were shifted to other CAGs.

**The halt was the result of deployment-related upheavals and disruption in the manpower "pipeline" to the Western Pacific. For further details on manpower problems in 1970, see Chapter 19.

one CACO and five CAPs during August and redistributed the Marines from them to other units. On 1 September, the 2d CAG discontinued still another CACO and four more CAPs. These reductions left the 2d CAG with about 650 Marines and 50 Navy corpsmen in five CACOs and 34 CAPs, all located in Quang Nam and working with about 800 PFs and RFs.[45]

American and South Vietnamese authorities made elaborate efforts to prevent the development of a sense of insecurity among the villagers the deactivated CAPs had protected. Psychological warfare teams saturated each TAOC with posters and leaflets and sent loudspeaker trucks to forewarn and reassure the people. In written and spoken words, they continually emphasized two themes: that the Marines were leaving because they were needed more elsewhere and that the local RFs and PFs could now defeat the Communists without American help.

A formal ceremony proceeded each deactivation. In the 4th CAG, for example, each CAP conducted a farewell parade in its village, attended by the district chief, the village chief and councilors, and as many villagers as could be persuaded to appear. The American side was represented by the CAP Marine squad, the 4th CAG commander, the district senior advisor, the CAC commander, and sometimes other distinguished guests. American and Vietnamese leaders made speeches, the Vietnamese thanking the Marines for their aid, and both Americans and Vietnamese again expressing confidence in the fighting prowess of the PFs. Villagers and CAP Maines exchanged small gifts. Often, according to the 4th CAG report, "social gatherings [were] held at the conclusion of the ceremony." The 1st and 3d CAGs held similar deactivation ceremonies, frequently including the presentation of Vietnamese decorations and awards to CAP Marines. How effective all this was in reassuring the people that they were not being abandoned was hard to determine. American and Vietnamese alike realized that, in the end, only combat successes by the RFs and PFs would maintain the people's sense of security.[46]

On 1 September, after deactivation of all CAPs outside Quang Nam, XXIV Corps returned operational control of the CAF to III MAF. The CAF itself, with only one CAG still in operation, had outlived its usefulness. The force headquarters ceased operations on 21 September, and two days later it was formally disestablished in a ceremony attended by Lieutenant Generals Sutherland, Lam, and McCutcheon, and other distinguished guests.[47]

After 21 September, direction of combined action operations rested with the 2d Combined Action Group, now commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John J. Tolnay, who had previously been executive officer of the CAF. The 2d CAG, with its headquarters at Hoi An, the capital of Quang Nam Province, constituted the "tesidual force of the III MAF Combined Action Program."[48] Under III MAF, it would coordinate combined action activities with Quang Nam Province, the 1st Marine Division, and the 2d ROKMC Brigade.

Soon after disestablishment of the CAF, CORDS again sought authority over the CAPs. Lieutenant Colonel Tolnay recalled:

> The Army advisors and the CORDS setup at province initially tried to assume some control over the combined action program, and we had a meeting of the minds there where it was determined and agreed to that it remained essentially a Marine program and that any dealings with CAPs, any dealings with CAP Marines and Vietnamese would be handled between the CAG commander and the Province Chief, and there was no difficulty after that.[49]

The 2d CAG took over the CAF School, which had moved in mid-September from East Da Nang to Hoi An. By the end of November, the school had resumed full operation. It trained the replacements who were coming in again from the United States and also Marines from line companies assigned to the Combined Unit Pacification Program.* To replace the CAF Language School, which had closed in September, the 2d CAG added more Vietnamese language training to the regular school curriculum and used one of the CAG's ARVN interpreters as an instructor. The CAG also established a Mobile Training Team which gave CACOs supplementary instruction in the field.[50]

Within Quang Nam, CAP and CACO operations continued with little change during the remaining months of 1970. The CAPs kept up their routine of patrols and ambushes except when the floods in late October forced many of them temporarily to evacuate their TAOCs. The CACOs continued to depend for artillery support on neighboring U.S., ARVN, or Korean Marine battalions, but they acquired their own 81mm mortar sections.[51] As CAP operations were winding down in the fall of 1970, one operation demonstrated the progress that district level authorities and PFs in combination with CAP Marines had made.

*In this program, ordinary rifle companies were broken down into squads, each of which was paired with a RF or PF platoon and operated like a CAP.

On 9 September 1970, elements of CACO 2-3 conducted a heliborne assault on a suspected VC rendezvous in Tanh Quit (4) Hamlet. The target area was three miles north of Dien Ban in rice paddy terrain bounded by Route 1 to the west and the Vinh Dien River to the east. Acting on intelligence given to the CACO, the district operations officer and the company commander shifted the adjacent CAP (2-3-8) into blocking positions in preparation for the assault. In order to make it appear like normal daily activity, members of CAP 2-3-7, the assault element, moved to the district headquarters in twos and threes during the afternoon.

"At about 1630 four helicopters landed at the compound, loaded the assault force under the command of the CACO and the district S-3 [operations officer] and flew to the targeted area," recalled Colonel Don R. Christensen, commander of the 2d CAG at the time. "Their operation achieved complete surprise as the assault force landed in the suspected hamlet while 14 VC cadre were meeting." Immediately after insertion, CAP 2-3-7 became engaged in a firefight. Aided by the blocking force, CAP 2-3-8, which now closed on the VC from the west, by the 15th PF Platoon, and two Huey gunships, the Marines concentrated devastating fire on the fleeing VC, killing 14 without sustaining any friendly casualties. Searching the area, the Marines captured one AK-47, two SKS rifles, three 9mm pistols, numerous grenades, and assorted documents and medical supplies.

The operation demonstrated the capabilities of CAP Marines and their counterpart Popular Forces when reacting rapidly to good intelligence. Using the Impact Awards procedures established by XXIV Corps, the CAG commander recognized the performance of the district S-3, the PF platoon commander, and three of his PFs at a ceremony at district headquarters three days later. This timely acknowledgement of performance contributed greatly toward raising the morale and esprit of the local forces at a time when CAP Marines were gradually being withdrawn, leaving the burden of the fighting to the Popular Forces.[52]

Although CAP units had been much reduced through redeployment by September 1970, the 2d CAG inherited many of the problems that had plagued the CAF during the year. The manpower shortage continued, especially at group headquarters. Lieutenant Colonel Tolnay explained:

> The T/O for this 2d CAG was woefully inadequate in terms of the dispersion of forces and the fact that I had to maintain a compound. The 68 personnel that I had in my . . . headquarters would have been sufficient had I been a tenant activity with some other organization, but having to maintain my own security and conduct all the functions of an infantry battalion outside of actually controlling the operations . . . I just didn't have enough people . . . .[53]

The CAG managed to keep an average of 10 Marines in the field per CAP, a number which Lieutenant Colonel Tolnay deemed barely adequate to cover a TAOC of the usual size.

The 2d CAG encountered difficulties in dealing with the ARVN high command. Whereas the CAF had had direct contact with the Deputy for Territorial Forces on the I Corps staff, the 2d CAG had to channel all of its communications with the corps through III MAF or Quang Nam Province. As a result, according to Tolnay, communication "was not too satisfactory."

A change in the type of Vietnamese forces working with the CAPs compounded the CAG's liaison difficulties. During late 1970, the Vietnamese began assigning Regional Force platoons rather than Popular Force platoons to some of the CAPs. Unlike the PF platoons, which had no higher military organization and were answerable directly to the district chief, the RFs had their own companies, groups, and battalions, the commanders of which were not controlled by the district chiefs but were controlled by the province chief. This fact greatly complicated the resolution of tactical disputes between RFs and Marines. Such disputes were frequent, as the RF persistently refused to follow what the Marines considered sound tactics or declined to assign the mimimum of 20 RFs the Marines deemed necessary to conduct operations. The RF organization deteriorated early in 1971 to the point where Lieutenant Colonel Tolnay began withdrawing CAPs from the field until the RFs responded to American requests for more men or changes in tactics.[54]

By the end of 1970, the Combined Action Ptogram had shrunk to the 2d CAG in Quang Nam. This group would continue operations until the withdrawal of the 3d MAB in June of the following year. Combined action had been one of the Marines' most notable contributions to the pacification effort, a daring and generally successful attempt to engage the Viet Cong on their own ground among the people. Probably more effectively than any other American military force, the CAP Marines had done what had to be done to win the war: they had broken the connection between the guerrillas and the peasants. Unfortunately,

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A 373446

Marines from a CUPP unit and a Popular Force soldier, who serves as their interpreter, question a woman suspected of providing assistance to the Viet Cong. The woman was detained and sent back to the district headquarters for more detailed interrogation.

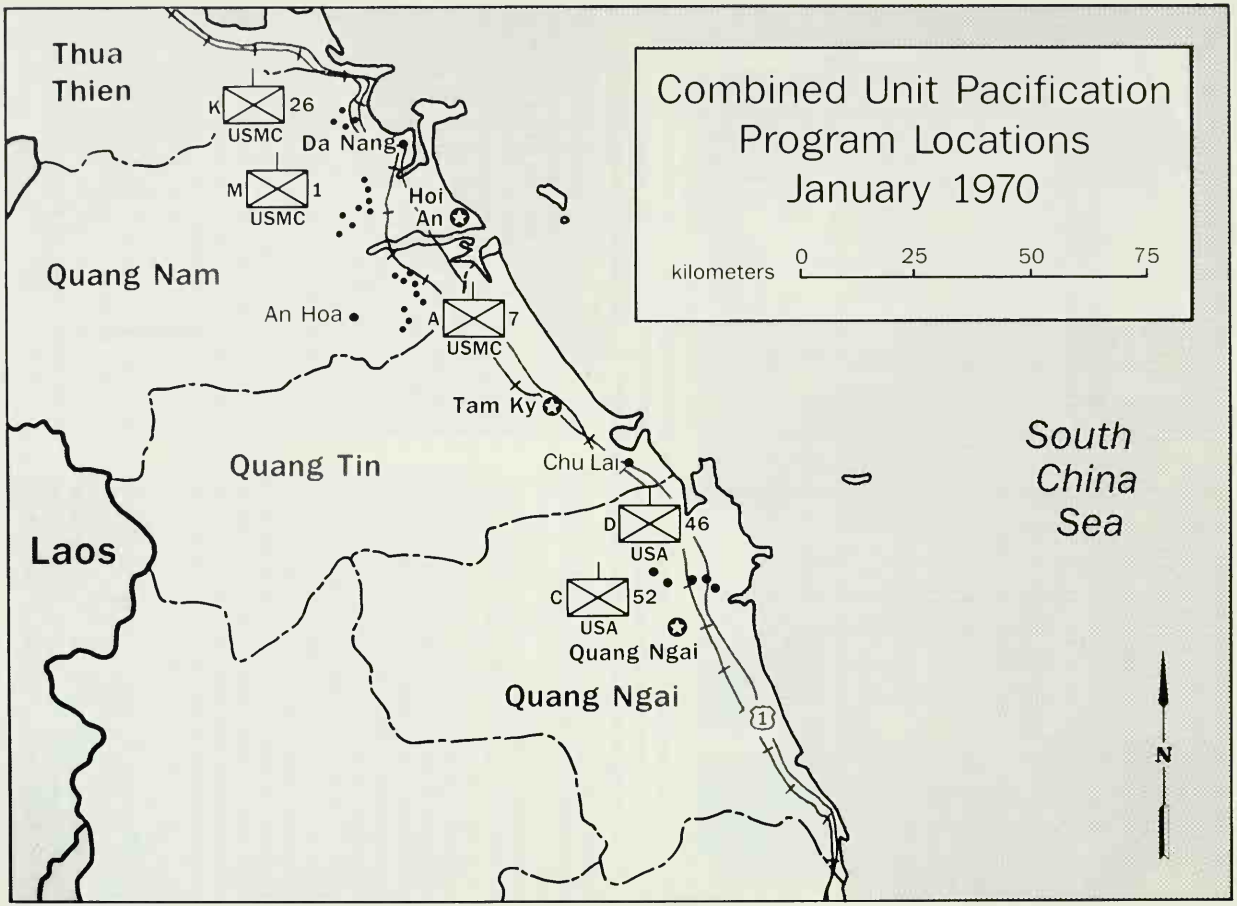
there were many more villages in I Corps, not to mention Vietnam, than there were CAPs.*

Building on Success: The Combined Unit Pacification Program

The effectiveness of the CAPs, combined with the diminution of contact with enemy main forces and the continuing guerrilla threat, led III MAF late in 1969 to institute the Infantry Company Intensified Pacification Program (ICIPP), in January 1970, redesignated the Combined Unit Pacification Program (CUPP). Much of the impetus for this new program came from Lieutenant General Nickerson. Brigadier General Dulacki, the III MAF Chief of Staff, recalled that Nickerson "was . . . quite impressed with . . . what the combined action units were doing. And . . . he felt pretty strongly that perhaps what we should do is start taking battalions and employing them in a similar fashion." Still inclined towards conducting larger scale offensive operations the Army and Marine infantry divisions under III MAF proved unwilling to commit entire battalions to such an unconventional mission and III MAF "didn't want to force the idea on them." Responding to this reluctance, however, III MAF developed a plan for using companies, which the divisions accepted. Divisions were then directed to assign companies based upon their current employment and geographic locations.[55]

The Americal Division, then still under operational control of III MAF, assigned the first two companies to CUPP, or at that time ICIPP, duty in October 1969, deploying squads from them in five hamlets in Quang Ngai. The 1st Marine Division joined the program the following month when Company M of the 1st Marines placed three squads in contested villages around Hill 55. By the end of the year, Company M had squads in eight hamlets, and the 5th and 7th Marines were preparing to establish their own CUPP units.[56] III MAF found that the success of these activities gradually began to instill confidence in the program within the 1st Division.

*According to Colonel Theodore E. Metzger, General Lewis Walt wrote the CAF commander a letter following a tour of CAF units in December 1969, saying, "In the end, I firmly believe this program will be the most important innovation of this war." Col Theodore E. Metzger, Comments on draft ms, 22Mar83 (Vietnam Comment File).


Combined Unit Pacification Program Locations January 1970
kilometers 0 25 50 75
Thua Thien
K 26 USMC
Da Nang
M 1 USMC
Hoi An
Quang Nam
An Hoa
A 7 USMC
Tam Ky
Quang Tin
Chu Lai
South China Sea
Laos
D 46 USA
C 52 USA
Quang Ngai
Quang Ngai
1
N

As in the CAP program, CUPP companies broke down into squads, each of which was paired with a RF or PF platoon to protect a particular village. The company headquarters, usually located near the headquarters of the district in which its squads were stationed, performed many of the functions of a CACO. Each CUPP squad had the same seven missions as a CAP, centering around territorial security and training the RF/PF, and the aim of the new program, as of the Combined Action Program, was to merge Marine firepower and military skill with the militia's intimate knowledge of the local people and terrain.

The CUPP, however, differed from the Combined Action Program in two ways. First, unlike CAP Marines, CUPP Marines were not specially selected or trained. They were regularly assigned members of a rifle company which had been given a special mission. Second, a CUPP company, and the Marine members of its combined units, remained under the operational control of their parent regiment and usually were deployed within that regiment's area of operations. CUPP units requested air and artillery support and medical evacuation through the same channels used by an ordinary rifle company, and the regiment could regroup them into a conventional company when necessary. As the Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, of III MAF put it, "It's a way to take forces and make [them] much more effective by multiplication . . . without destroying the infantry unit itself. . . . As long as you're got them in a CUPP, you can always bring them back together if you had to."[57]

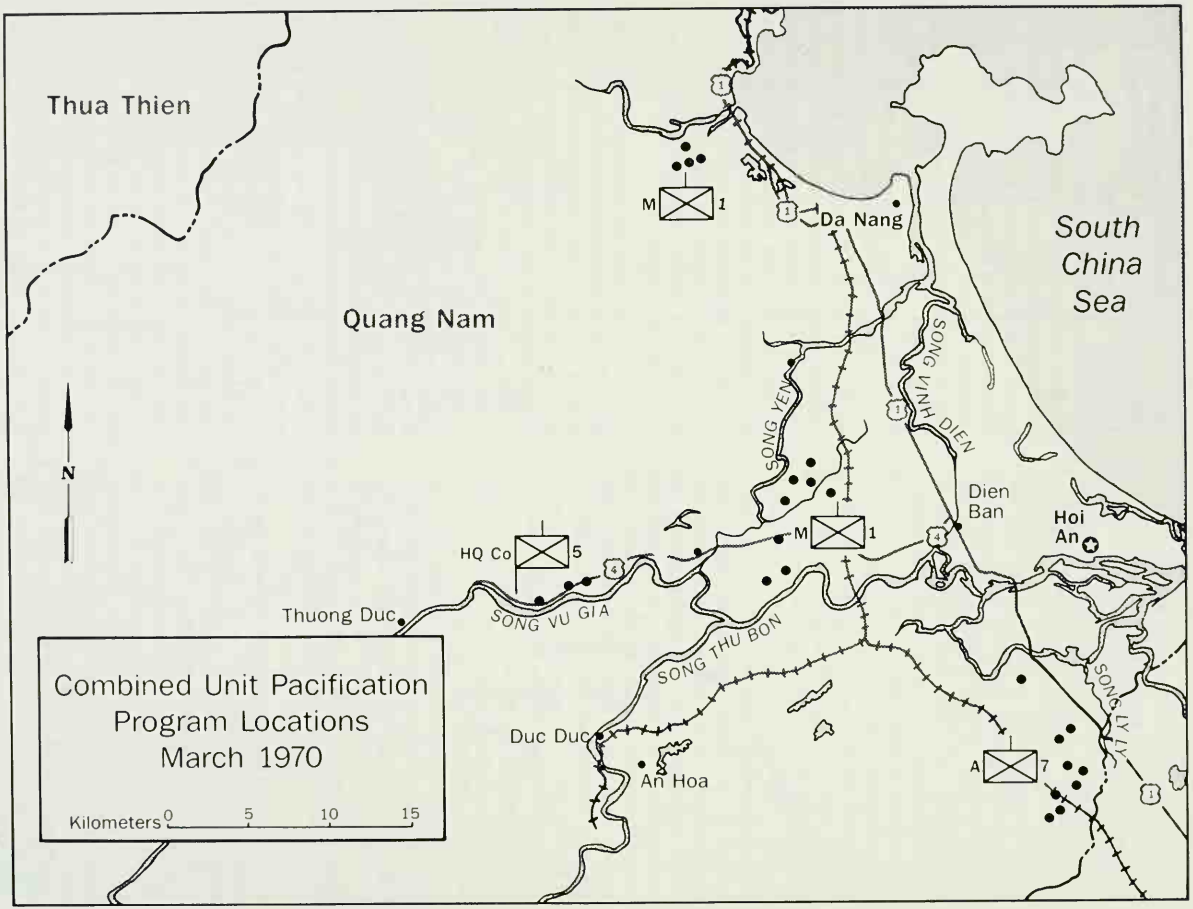
Beginning with the early months of 1970, the CUPP program was expanded and pushed vigorously by both Lieutenant Generals Nickerson and McCutcheon. The latter, according to his Deputy G-3, Colonel John W. Haggerty III, was "very much interested in CUPPing the whole outfit [1st Marine Division] in order to maximize the . . . Vietnamization process."[58]

The program never approached divisional size, but during the year every regiment of the division committed at least a company to combined action. The 1st Marines' Company M continued combined operations throughout the year. During January, the 26th Marines inserted elements of its Company K in four hamlets just south of Nam O Bridge. On 15 January, Company A of the 7th Marines started combined operations in nine hamlets along Route 1 north of LZ Baldy and along Route 535 between Baldy and FSB Ross. The 5th Marines initially did not designate a full CUPP company, but early in February organized a combined action platoon under its headquarters company. The three squads of this platoon established themselves in villages along Route 4 where it passed by the foot of Charlie Ridge.[59]

In March, the redeployment of the 26th Marines and its accompanying realignment of regimental TAORs brought changes in CUPP organization and control. The 1st Marines on 6 March tranferred operational control of its Company M to the 5th Marines, which had expanded its AO to include the villages around Hill 55 where most of the company's squads were stationed. At the same time, the 1st Marines absorbed the personnel of the 26th Marines CUPP squads and concentrated them for defense of two of the four hamlets initially protected by the departing regiment. These rearrangements left the 1st Marines with three CUPP squads under its direct control: the two inherited from the 26th Marines and one squad from Company M in the AO of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines. The 5th Marines now had its own Headquarters Company CUPP Platoon and Company M from the 1st Marines, while the 7th Marines continued operations with its Company A.

By the end of April, the 1st Marine Division had 22 CUPP squads protecting some 23,000 villagers and working with 16 PF and 7 RF platoons and over 500 armed PSDF. Most of the CUPP teams were located in villages along Routes 1, 4, and 535 or around major allied bases, such as Hill 55 and LZ Baldy. Unlike CAPs, which usually protected villages more or less friendly to the allies, most of the CUPP squads occupied communities under strong Viet Cong influence. Of the nine hamlets held by the 7th Marines' CUPP company, for instance, eight had C and D ratings under the Hamlet Evaluation System and the remaining one was acknowledged to be VC controlled.[60]

The combined unit pacification companies underwent another reorganization in September, as the 7th Marines redeployed in Keystone Robin Alpha and the 5th Marines took over its TAOR. On 7 September, Company G, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines relieved Company A of the 7th Marines in its hamlets along Routes 1 and 535. The 5th Marines' company incorporated over 50 percent of the men of the 7th Marines CUPP unit. Two weeks later, as the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines turned the Thuong Duc corridor over to the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, the latter regiment resumed operational control of its own Company M and also of the three 5th Marines headquarters CUPP squads along Route 4. The 1st Marines then turned opera-


Thua Thien
Quang Nam
South China Sea
Da Nang
M 1
SONG YEN
SONG VINH DIEN
Dien Ban
Hoi An
M 1
HQ Co 5
Thuong Duc
SONG VU GIA
SONG THU BON
SONG LY LY
Duc Duc
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N
Combined Unit Pacification Program Locations March 1970
Kilometers 0 5 10 15

tional control of the combined unit squads over to its 1st and 2d Battalions. On 1 December, in the final expansion of CUPP for the year, the 5th Marines created a new CUPP platoon to protect Hoang Que Hamlet just north of LZ Baldy. Created at the request of the South Vietnamese district commander to work with a newly formed PF unit, the new 5th Marines platoon completed a solid network of CUPP hamlets along Route 1 from Baldy to the southern boundary of the Korean Marine TAOR.[61]

Establishment of a new CUPP company required detailed planning by both American and South Vietnamese forces and thorough training and indoctrination of the company itself. The 7th Marines, for example, began preparing for insertion of its CUPP company in early December 1969. Planning began with meetings between staff officers of the regiment and GVN officials of Quang Nam Province and Que Son District. At these meetings, Americans and Vietnamese by mutual agreement selected the nine target hamlets. Each hamlet had to meet two requirements. It had to have a HES rating of C or lower, and it had to have been selected for improvement in the Quang Nam Province Pacification and Development Plan for 1970. Once the hamlets had been chosen, Que Son District gave the 7th Marines detailed information on them, including lists of known and suspected VC, population figures, and designations, leaders' names, and manpower strengths of the RF or PF units defending them.

Meanwhile, the regiment had selected Company A, commanded by Captain Delbert M. Hutson, for the CUPP assignment. Early in January, the company assembled at FSB Ross to prepare for its new mission, its training period enlivened by a sapper attack on Ross on 6 January. All members of the company underwent intensive refresher training in infantry weapons and small-unit tactics by a Division Mobile Training Team, and they received instruction in various aspects of their mission from the Vietnamese district chief, the U.S. province advisors, a division psychological warfare team, and their own company and battalion officers. They also had sessions with a division Personal Response team, the members of which sought to prepare the Marines to live and work with the Vietnamese. To gain practical experience in working in the field

Marines of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines search a grassy site near Hill 55 south of Da Nang. The 1st Marines took over control of the CUPP companies from the 26th Marines, who were about to redeploy from Vietnam. The CUPP program expanded during 1970.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A 373979

with PFs, the company conducted combined day and night patrols in Que Son District with local RFs and PFs.

Key officers and Marines of the company received additional training. During January, all the platoon commanders and squad leaders of Company A attended the CAF School in East Da Nang, and 15 Marines went to Vietnamese language school. A total of 24 Marines from the company spent three or four days on-the-job training with 1st Marines CUPP units, and six others did the same with elements of the 2d Combined Action Group. Captain Hutson spent a day with leaders of a CACO of the 1st CAG. As the final step in preparation, the Que Son District Chief and his American advisor held meetings at which they introduced the Marine squad leaders to the chiefs of the villages and hamlets in which they would be working.

Between 15 and 31 January, the 7th Marines installed its combined action squads in their hamlets. Except for the insertion in VC-controlled Phu Trach, which took the form of a cordon and search by the combined unit and other RFs and PFs, all the insertions occurred at a simple but dramatic ceremony. Each ceremony followed the same pattern, the American part coordinated by the 7th Marines and the Vietnamese part by the district chief. It would begin with the Marine squad and the RF or PF platoon lined up facing each other in front of a speaker's platform. The district chief presided for the Vietnamese and Colonel Gildo S. Codispoti, the 7th Marines commander, for the Americans. (Colonel Cadispoti made a point of attending every insertion after the Que Son District Chief commented that his presence impressed the villagers, who seldom saw a high-ranking U.S. officer.)

After 10-15 minutes of music by a section of the 1st Marine Division band, the district chief, Colonel Codispoti, the village chief, and the hamlet chief, in that order, made brief speeches. Then the Marines marched over to the RFs or PFs and joined them in their ranks. A period of informal handshaking and picture taking followed. The 7th Marines report noted that "Pictures taken using a Polaroid camera [were] found to be very effective. These pictures were immediately presented to various hamlet and village officials with very favorable responses."[62]

In February, the 5th Marines inserted its CUPP platoon in a different manner. The regiment used elements of two rifle companies to surround and screen the targeted hamlets. While this was being done, the three Marine squads and their counterpart RF platoons held a single joint ceremony at Hill 25 and then moved into their hamlets to begin combat operations.[63]

Once established in their hamlets, CUPP units, like CAPs, spent most of their time on patrols and ambushes. The combined units of all three regiments employed "mobile CAP" tactics, constantly shifting position with their AOs. A squad leader from Company A, 7th Marines reported in May:

> . . . We run approximately two or three . . . ambushes a night and . . . one day patrol. Every night, just as it starts getting dark, we move to a night POS [position], and every day as it starts getting light we move to a day POS. We were constantly on the move. We never stay in one place more than once a week, or sometimes even once every two weeks.[64]

CUPP platoons often moved outside their AOs for joint operations with other CUPP platoons and Marine and Vietnamese regular units. They participated in cordon and search operations and provided blocking forces. Their activities could easily be coordinated with those of line companies and battalions. A 7th Marines report noted:

> The success in coordinating and integrating CUPP activities with regular infantry units has been outstanding. CUPP Marines have acted as guides; furnished tactical and intelligence information; and provided other support for various units operating in the vicinity of CUPP AOs. The enemy has lost large quantities of supplies and personnel as a result of these operations.[65]

All the combined pacification squads emphasized training of their Vietnamese counterparts. Informally during operations and through regular classes, they tried to increase the militia's proficiency with infantry weapons and in patrol and ambush tactics, and they instructed some RF and PF soldiers in the use and care of the M60 machine gun and in requesting and controlling artillery and air support. As did the CAPs, the CUPP Marines increasingly encouraged RF and PF platoon commanders to plan and lead their own operations.[66]

In November, in probably the most ambitious training program launched by a CUPP company, Company G, 5th Marines paired each individual Marine with a RF or PF soldier deemed a likely candidate for platoon leader. Each Marine was to work with his counterpart in formal training sessions and in developing "mutual trust and exchange of ideas." The program culminated in a school held at LZ Baldy from 28 to 30 December and attended by 10 Marines, each of whom brought along his RF or PF counterpart. Together, Marines and Vietnamese took instruction in

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373820

CUPP Marines and South Vietnamese Regional Force troops from Company G, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines and the 306th Regional Force Battalion form the cordon in a cordon and search mission in sandy terrain near the coast, 20 miles southeast of Da Nang.

map and compass reading, defense against mines and boobytraps, and patrolling tactics, and they spent a full day on the rifle range. The instruction was "well received by the surprisingly attentive Popular Forces."[67]

When not on operations or engaged in training, CUPP units, again following the example of the CAPs, tried to improve the daily life of the villagers. Each CUPP squad had a Navy corpsman attached to it, who regularly assembled the inhabitants for medical examinations and treatment of minor hurts and ailments. The riflemen worked with the villagers on local improvements. During April, for instance, one of the 5th Marines squads along Route 4 helped the farmers of Lam Phung village build an irrigation canal to carry water to their paddies from the Thu Bon River. The Marines provided rock fill and material for culverts, and the Vietnamese furnished most of the labor, a pump, and a motor. During the October and November floods, CUPP Marines helped evacuate endangered hamlets and then joined the people in relief and reconstruction. In December, Company G, 5th Marines launched a farming project in which each squad and a Vietnamese family together planted and cultivated a plot of vegetables. The Marines hoped by this to improve the farmers' diet and to introduce a new cash crop.[68]

The line companies engaged in combined action, and like their counterparts in the CAF, suffered from a manpower shortage during the year. Many CUPP squads, which were supposed to be reinforced to 15-18 men, had to operate with as few as seven or eight Marines, and they often found themselves paired with understrength RF or PF platoons. A member of a 7th Marines CUPP squad said in May that "We get anywhere from 7 to 8 to 10 PFs a night, and the largest majority of them stay down at the PF compound on the hill which is not needed. We could really use some more men down here."[69]

Morale among CUPP Marines, as a platoon commander pointed out, "is a very touchy subject. Being out here by themselves, working a squad with a platoon of PFs, especially in areas where the PFs are new and are not quite so militarily proficient as one might like, the morale of a CUPP unit can deteriorate very quickly." In the 7th Marines, the CUPP company, un-

CHAPTER 9

The Spectrum of Pacification and Vietnamization, 1970

Line Units in Pacification—Kit Carson Scouts in 1970—Targeting the VCI—Civic Action, 1970
Communist Counter-Pacification Efforts—Vietnamization—Results, 1970

Line Units in Pacification

While their primary mission was to attack enemy military units, Marine rifle companies and battalions often conducted operations directly aimed at improving population control and security. Usually cooperating with Vietnamese police and Regional and Popular Forces and sometimes with CAP and CUPP units, Marine infantry participated in cordon and search operations, protected rice harvests, and furnished security for GVN elections. In addition to these long-standing activities, during 1970 some units began trying to reorient their entire scheme of operation toward protecting the people and eradicating the VC underground.

Cordon and search operations, varying in size from a surprise raid on a hamlet by a platoon searching for a single Viet Cong agent to a two- or three-day sweep of a village complex by a battalion, remained a frequently employed, productive tactic. In the larger cordon and search operations, referred to as County Fairs, several companies of Marines worked with RF or PF units, Vietnamese national police, and U.S. and Vietnamese intelligence and counterintelligence teams. Moving in before dawn, the infantry surrounded the target area, allowing no movement in or out. Then Vietnamese troops and police, occasionally aided by Marines, collected all the civilians at a prearranged spot outside the village. Here each person was questioned and his or her identity checked against lists of known or suspected local VC. At the same time, teams of Vietnamese troops and police searched each house for concealed arms, food, and equipment and combed the village for VC hidden in tunnels and holes.

While the search went on, the Americans and Vietnamese entertained the assembled villagers with motion pictures, plays, and comedy skits by GVN propaganda teams, and often a concert by Marine bandsmen. Whenever possible, the Marines sent in a medical team to treat minor illnesses and injuries and give advice on health. These activities gave the operation its "County Fair" aspect and nickname. By means of them, the allies hoped to win the allegiance of the villagers or at least to make less irritating the disruption of their daily routine.[1]

Late in 1970, the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines began adding a population census to the usual cordon and search. In the villages of Ap Quan Nam and Kim Lien north of Da Nang, the battalion, aided by RF and national police, kept its cordon around the village long enough for the police to conduct a detailed census. The police listed and photographed every inhabitant of each house. They also made a complete inventory of the contents of each dwelling and a drawing showing the building and all objects and structures around it. The troops and police would then leave, only to return a couple of weeks later and compare people and buildings to the earlier lists, pictures, and diagrams. If a young man of military age whose name and picture were not on file, appeared in a house he was taken away for questioning. If a haystack was found where none had been, the searchers tore it apart looking for arms or food, often finding them. The Marines and their allies hoped that this technique, used earlier by the French, would make it easier to detect VC infiltration and VC supply caches in the hamlets.[2]

During the year, the Marines began conducting fewer large County Fairs and more surprise small-scale cordon and search operations. These operations, the S-2 of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines recalled:

> . . . were very short, lasted two or three hours. We just dropped out of the sky with the helicopters with the cordon and then moved in with the A[rmed] P[ropaganda] T[eam], a C[counterintelligence] sub-team, an ITT [Interrogation and Translation] sub-team to support us, and whatever informants we happened to have that prompted the operation, scoff up the people we wanted and go, all within three hours . . . .[3]

By moving quickly with minimal advance planning and coordination, the Marines improved their chances of surprising VC or VCI in the hamlets. The short duration of the actual search meant less inconvenience for the villagers and hence, Marines hoped, less resentment of the government.

Aided by increasingly large numbers of RFs and PFs, the Marines continued their effort—called Operation Golden Fleece—to keep the twice-yearly rice harvest

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373324

After a government informant revealed the location of a hidden Viet Cong rice cache, local villagers and their children dig up the rice for their own use.

from being seized by the Viet Cong. Before the harvest periods, which occurred in April and May and again in September and October, each regiment launched attacks on known enemy base camps and cache areas and arranged its daily patrols to block infiltration routes into rice-growing areas. During the harvest, all units increased the number of patrols and ambushes around the rice paddies. After the harvest, Marines helped guard mills and storage facilities and with the Vietnamese used highway check points to control the movement of the foodstuffs. By 1970, Operation Golden Fleece had merged into the broader continuing campaign to disrupt the enemy's supply system, a campaign which Hoi Chanhs, POWs, and captured documents indicated was keeping the NVA and VC hungry and demoralized.[4]

The Republic of Vietnam held elections in June for village and hamlet officials and provincial and municipal councils. In August, the people went to the polls again, this time to choose members of the National Senate. In Quang Nam, the 1st Marine Division cooperated with provincial and district authorities to protect polling places and voters from VC terrorism. The Marines left actual guarding of the polls to the RFs, PFs, PSDF and national police. They deployed their own forces in the countryside to block likely enemy paths of approach and to deny the Communists access to mortar and rocket launching sites. The Marine regiments also kept platoons on alert for rapid helicopter movement to reinforce localities under attack. All Marine plans and orders for election security repeatedly instructed troops to avoid entering populated areas unless an attack took place and to refrain from any action that could be construed as an American attempt to influence the voting.[5]

Behind the shield thus provided, the elections went forward on schedule, almost unmarred by terrorism and with no major enemy interference. Voter turnouts in Quang Nam, as elsewhere in South Vietnam, were encouragingly large. In the June provincial and municipal elections, for example, 83 percent of the eligible voters in Quang Nam Province and 73 percent of those in Da Nang City cast ballots.[6]

The 7th Marines in mid-April put into effect an ambitious pacification plan. The plan, developed by Colonel Derning after he took command of the regiment in February, was aimed at denying the VC access to the many Communist-dominated villages in the Que Son Valley. These villages had long furnished supplies and recruits to main forces operating in the Que Son Mountains and had served as way stations on infiltration routes between the enemy base areas and Da Nang. Derning's plan also recognized that conventional infantry operations were producing less and less contact.

Responding to what appeared to be a change in enemy focus in the 7th Marines' area from conventional operations to guerrilla warfare, the 7th Marines also refocused, gearing their tactics to population control. The 7th Marines commander, in consultation with Que Son District Headquarters and its CORDS advisor, selected a target list of D- and C-rated hamlets for each of the participating battalions. Derning also arranged to attach a RF or PF platoon, three national policemen, and a team of CORDS advisors to each rifle company. Under the plan, each company was to devote its daylight operations to maintaining a permanent cordon around one or more hamlets. The civilian inhabitants were to be allowed in and out through checkpoints manned by PFs and police who would examine GVN identification cards and search the people for food and other contraband. This was intended, according to Derning, to assure that when

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Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373324

After a government informant revealed the location of a hidden Viet Cong rice cache, local villagers and their children dig up the rice for their own use.

from being seized by the Viet Cong. Before the harvest periods, which occurred in April and May and again in September and October, each regiment launched attacks on known enemy base camps and cache areas and arranged its daily patrols to block infiltration routes into rice-growing areas. During the harvest, all units increased the number of patrols and ambushes around the rice paddies. After the harvest, Marines helped guard mills and storage facilities and with the Vietnamese used highway check points to control the movement of the foodstuffs. By 1970, Operation Golden Fleece had merged into the broader continuing campaign to disrupt the enemy's supply system, a campaign which Hoi Chanhs, POWs, and captured documents indicated was keeping the NVA and VC hungry and demoralized.[4]

The Republic of Vietnam held elections in June for village and hamlet officials and provincial and municipal councils. In August, the people went to the polls again, this time to choose members of the National Senate. In Quang Nam, the 1st Marine Division cooperated with provincial and district authorities to protect polling places and voters from VC terrorism. The Marines left actual guarding of the polls to the RFs, PFs, PSDF and national police. They deployed their own forces in the countryside to block likely enemy paths of approach and to deny the Communists access to mortar and rocket launching sites. The Marine regiments also kept platoons on alert for rapid helicopter movement to reinforce localities under attack. All Marine plans and orders for election security repeatedly instructed troops to avoid entering populated areas unless an attack took place and to refrain from any action that could be construed as an American attempt to influence the voting.[5]

Behind the shield thus provided, the elections went forward on schedule, almost unmarred by terrorism and with no major enemy interference. Voter turnouts in Quang Nam, as elsewhere in South Vietnam, were encouragingly large. In the June provincial and municipal elections, for example, 83 percent of the eligible voters in Quang Nam Province and 73 percent of those in Da Nang City cast ballots.[6]

The 7th Marines in mid-April put into effect an ambitious pacification plan. The plan, developed by Colonel Derning after he took command of the regiment in February, was aimed at denying the VC access to the many Communist-dominated villages in the Que Son Valley. These villages had long furnished supplies and recruits to main forces operating in the Que Son Mountains and had served as way stations on infiltration routes between the enemy base areas and Da Nang. Derning's plan also recognized that conventional infantry operations were producing less and less contact.

Responding to what appeared to be a change in enemy focus in the 7th Marines' area from conventional operations to guerrilla warfare, the 7th Marines also refocused, gearing their tactics to population control. The 7th Marines commander, in consultation with Que Son District Headquarters and its CORDS advisor, selected a target list of D- and C-rated hamlets for each of the participating battalions. Derning also arranged to attach a RF or PF platoon, three national policemen, and a team of CORDS advisors to each rifle company. Under the plan, each company was to devote its daylight operations to maintaining a permanent cordon around one or more hamlets. The civilian inhabitants were to be allowed in and out through checkpoints manned by PFs and police who would examine GVN identification cards and search the people for food and other contraband. This was intended, according to Derning, to assure that when

a farmer went out to his field or paddy "he could only take his spade, could only take his little bag of rice." The villagers were also cautioned to avoid even incidental contact with the VC/NVA. Medical and propaganda teams were to work among the villagers, seeking to explain to them the requirements of the program and to win their support for the GVN. Throughout, the plan emphasized humane but firm treatment of the people.[7]

Only the 2d Battalion, operating around FSB Ross, fully implemented the plan. On 15 April, the battalion deployed three of its companies, each with a PF platoon and police and CORDS detachments, to cordon nine D- and C-rated hamlets west and south of FSB Ross. The companies set up their checkpoints, and the PFs and police searched the hamlets for caches of arms and supplies. Each inhabitant received a pamphlet in Vietnamese explaining movement and curfew restrictions, promising rewards for information on the location of enemy troops, caches, and boobytraps, explaining how to obtain medical aid from the teams working in the hamlet, and offering families the chance to resettle in government-controlled areas. Those willing to move, the pamphlet promised, could take all their household goods and property with them. The Marines reinforced the pamphlets with air-dropped leaflets, MedCaps, and frequent visits by GVN propaganda and political drama teams.[8]

The program soon produced results. Within 15 days of the establishment of the cordons, according to the 2d Battalion's report, 350 civilians requested resettlement in GVN-controlled villages. In several target hamlets, people pointed out alleged members of the VCI. The military proficiency and self-confidence of the RFs and PFs working with the Marines improved. Most important, the cordons physically separated the VC and NVA from what had been their supply sources and rest areas. Colonel Derning said:

> . . . We cut Chatlie right off his hot chow, and we cut him right off his conjugal visits. He couldn't get in or out of the ville. If he got in, he was had; if he got out, he couldn't get in. Naturally we cut the NVA off also. And early in this game we caught quite a few of them drifting in and out of the ville, not knowing we were there . . .[9]

Operating under this altered approach, those units of the 7th Marines involved were able to efficiently control their areas of operation, minimizing enemy movement among the people. The Marines were briefed and rested during the day in the relative safety of the occupied villages and sought the enemy at night. "The fact was we had an advantage because at night under these circumstances anything moving was, in fact, an enemy force," said Derning, "so that we had not much problem then in identification and not much opportunity to injure or to kill innocent people."[10]

While apparently effective, the program was limited in scope and lasted only a short time. The 7th Marines' 1st Battalion operating around LZ Baldy, and scheduled to take part, did not fully apply the concept, although it did increase its operations with RFs and PFs. Most of the 3d Battalion, operating against base areas in the Que Sons, never participated. The 2d Battalion kept three of its companies on cordon operations during April and May, but in June it diverted one of them to other activities. In July, the entire battalion left the Que Son Valley for Operation Pickens Forest. In August, it moved into the mountains on Operation Imperial Lake, and in September it stood down for redeployment with the rest of the regiment.[11]

Other infantry units had their own special pacification efforts. The 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, for example, formed a combined Marine-PF unit to control Nui Kim Son, a small village at the gates of Camp Lauer, the battalion's headquarters cantonment just south of Marble Mountain. The Viet Cong had strong influence in Nui Kim Son. Repeatedly they put up NVA propaganda posters, and occasionally they set a mine or boobytrap. The GVN village chief refused to stay in the village, living instead in a hut in Camp Lauer. Nui Kim Son acted as a staging point for Communists infiltrating toward Marble Mountain and Da Nang East, and it also harbored prostitutes, drug peddlers, and black marketeers.

On 2 September, the 2d Battalion established a squad of 12 enlisted Marines selected from throughout the battalion for CAP experience and Vietnamese language proficiency. Under operational control of Major John S. Grinalds, the battalion operations officer, the unit was stationed permanently in Nui Kim Son to work as a combined force with the local PFs. The Marines, reinforced to 13 men in November, set up checkpoints to control movement through the village and tried to curtail vice. In their first two months of operation, Marines and the PFs captured 24 confirmed Viet Cong agents trying to pass their checkpoints. Nevertheless, the 2d Battalion, according to Major Grinalds, never fully pacified Nui Kim Son, a fact attested to by the continued refusal of the village chief to live there.[12]

Kit Carson Scouts in 1970

During 1970 III MAF continued to support the Kit Carson Scout program and to benefit from it. The Marines had initiated this program back in 1966 by hiring six Hoi Chanhs—former Viet Cong guerrillas—as combat scouts. Lieutenant General Nickerson, then a major general commanding the 1st Marine Division, gave the former VC their name, in memory of the American scout and Indian fighter. When the program proved successful, MACV extended it to all U.S. commands in Vietnam. Throughout the war, the scouts had rendered loyal and invaluable service in the field while teaching American troops VC methods and tactics.

At the beginning of 1970, over 2,300 Kit Carson Scouts (KCS) were serving with American units, 650 of them under III MAF. III MAF had responsibility for administering the program throughout I Corps until March, when XXIV Corps took it over, leaving III MAF in charge only of the scouts with Marine units in Quang Nam. As Marines redeployed, the scouts attached to them were reassigned within I Corps. From 111 scouts in July, the number working with the Marines fell to 95 in December.

By 1970, III MAF had a well-established procedure for recruiting, screening, and training Kit Carson Scouts. Potential scouts came from the Chieu Hoi centers in Da Nang and Hoi An. There, a team headed by a Marine NCO, experienced in working with KCS, carefully investigated the motivation and background of each candidate. An ex-guerrilla who passed this first screening went to the KCS Training Center west of Da Nang for 28 days of instruction and further evaluation. Classes at the center were small, numbering usually no more than eight men. A typical class, Number 5-70, which graduated on 21 August 1970, consisted of seven trainees, ranging in age from 17 to 32. All had been born in Quang Nam, lived there, and fought there as Viet Cong for periods of three months to six years. Only one of them was married. Most gave as their reason for changing sides: "Fed up, not enough supplies."

KCS candidates at the school received military training from instructors, most of whom were themselves senior scouts. The instructors worked with the candidates day and night, watching them carefully for any sign that they might still be loyal to the VC. Trainees learned such skills as field sketching and the use of sensors. They acquired the rudiments of English, both in formal classes and by viewing English language feature films.

After graduation from the training school, scouts were hired as indigenous employees of the American military.[13] For especially meritorious service or bravery in battle, a scout could receive Vietnamese military decorations or the United States Navy Commendation Medal, Bronze Star Medal, or Silver Star Medal. In the field, as a 1st Marine Division report put it, "Employment of Kit Carson Scouts is limited only by the imagination of their unit commander." Scouts guided Marine patrols, made propaganda broadcasts, directed Marines to supply and equipment caches, and helped identify members of the VCI. Many conducted courses for Marines in Viet Cong mine and boobytrap techniques and other enemy methods and tactics. During 1970, Kit Carson Scouts attached to Marine units conducted over 9,000 patrols and were credited with killing 43 enemy; rounding up 313 prisoners, suspects, and Hoi Chanhs; and capturing 96 weapons.

Targeting the VCI

Main force units and guerrillas were the visible manifestation of the enemy threat to South Vietnam, but the Communists had another, hidden, equally dangerous dimension. This second dimension was the Viet Cong's clandestine political and administrative apparatus, called by the allies the VCI. The VCI extended its tentacles into every hamlet, village, and city, and even into the GVN itself. Its influence reached into the most militarily secure areas, often literally to the very gates of American cantonments. During 1970, as overt military activity declined, the Marines joined other allied forces in an intensified attack on this concealed element of Communist power.

The VCI, according to the MACV command historians, "was not a defined Communist organization; it was a working concept for the GVN, uniting as one target the variety of organizational and political efforts the Communists carefully compartmented and manipulated separately."[14] More specifically, the III MAF/ICTZ Combined Campaign Plan for 1970 defined the VCI as "The political and administrative organization through which the Viet Cong control or seek to control the South Vietnamese people" and as "Those individuals who constitute the command and control element of the communist politico-military organization which exists overtly and covertly throughout RVN."[15]

As the allies understood it, the VCI included the Communist People's Revolutionary Party (PRP), through which North Vietnam directed the entire enemy war effort; the PRP's public political arm, the National Liberation Front (NLF), ostensibly a coalition of nationalist parties including the Communists; and a range of specialized organizations for farmers, workers, women, youth, and other groups. Each of these entities had branches at every level of government, from the nation down to the hamlet. The Communist armed forces—the People's Army of North Vietnam (NVA) and the South Vietnam Liberation Army (VC main and local force units and guerrillas)—operated under the direction of the VCI. Members of the VCI, living among the people, sought to control the people through propaganda and terrorism; provided intelligence, supplies, and recruits for the insurgent armed forces; and, in fact, constituted an alternative government throughout most of South Vietnam. Allied estimates of the total number of VCI members varied greatly depending on what categories of active Communists were included on any one list. Reports of VCI strength and VCI losses could easily be inflated by adding in peasants caught carrying rice into the hills, women and children found planting booby traps, and other low-level functionaries. To assure uniform reporting and to focus effort on the most significant elements of the enemy, the U.S. and the GVN had by 1970 narrowed the definition of VCI to officials and members of the PRP and high-ranking leaders of the NLF and other Front groups (Category A) and to individuals in any enemy organization trained to assume leadership positions (Category B).[16]

In Quang Nam, the local VCI, like the enemy armed forces, was directed by *Front 4*. A political as well as a military headquarters, *Front 4* had three staff sections, labelled by allied intelligence *70A*, *70B*, and *70C*. *Section 70A*, under the North Vietnamese General Nguyen Chanh Binh, controlled the NVA and VC main forces in Quang Nam, while *70C* had charge of military administration, finance, and logistics. Both of these sections took orders from *Section 70B*, the Political Section, often called by the Communists the Current Affairs Section. This section, headed by a civilian PRP member, dictated enemy political and military strategy in Quang Nam, subject to instructions from *Military Region 5*, the Communist headquarters for all 1 Corps south of the DMZ.*

*For details of the Communist military chain of command, see Chapter 1 and Chapter 2.

Under *Front 4* each district in the province had its own VCI organization which in turn controlled village and hamlet units. At each level, a military affairs committee conducted minings, boobytrappings, assassinations, and terrorism. A political, or "current affairs" committee established overall policy and coordinated nonmilitary activities and supply efforts. Most district and local committees also had security sections. Members of these groups forged GVN identification cards and other documents, provided bodyguards for important Communists passing through their areas, and when necessary directed main force units preparing attacks in their localities to hidden tunnels, supply caches, and assembly points.

In early 1970, according to allied intelligence, about 7,600 identified Category A and B VCI members were active in Quang Nam. Most of them were South Vietnamese born and raised in the province, although the VCI now contained a growing leavening of North Vietnamese, usually attached to the security sections. Evidence from prisoners and captured documents indicated that VCI strength in the province had declined as a result of continuing allied pressure. The VCI now often had to place ill-qualified people in important jobs or require one individual to perform the tasks of two or three.[17] Nevertheless, the infrastructure remained ubiquitous and threatening. Major Grinalds, the S-2 of the 1st Marines, reported that as late as mid-1971:

> [As] near as I could tell, . . . every political entity in Quang Nam Province—from the province level right down to the lowest hamlet—shared with GVN or at least had right alongside GVN a . . . VC government of its own. . . . The degree to which they were visible, in any one hamlet or village, was sort of in direct relationship to our presence in the area. [If] we were there all the time, they generally tended to work at night and they were less obvious but . . . they were powerful . . . .[18]

Besides politically undermining the South Vietnamese government, the VCI contributed directly to the ability of enemy main forces to attack allied military units. Major Grinalds explained that the "VCI . . . are not a separate entity from the main force . . . they are part and parcel of the conventional force operation in the lowlands. They're not something that can be left alone because the main force looked to the VCI for several things. First, for intelligence. That's their primary intelligence collection-evaluation agency. They also looked to them for supplies." Most important, they relied on the infrastructure to guide their

clandestine movement from their mountain bases to attack positions in the lowlands. The VCI directed the units to tunnels and hidden rest areas and pointed out the paths through boodytrapped sectors. Without the VCI the NVA, strangers to the southern provinces, would face most of the operational handicaps that hindered American units in the Vietnamese countryside.[19]

In the Phoenix/Phung Hoang Program, the Americans and South Vietnamese tried to bring together under one organization the anti-VCI activities of all GVN agencies concerned with pacification and security. By pooling information, the agencies would identify the individual members of the VCI in each locality and then coordinate civilian and military efforts to kill or apprehend them. The national pacification plan for 1970 assigned five Phoenix/Phung Hoang goals for the year: improvement of the organization; enlistment of popular support through publicity; involvement of village and hamlet officials in the effort; improvement of the training of personnel; and an emphasis on "fair, correct, and humane" treatment of VCI suspects.[20]

The Phoenix/Phung Hoang organization in Quang Nam conformed in structure to national guidelines. Province and district Phung Hoang committees, chaired respectively by the province and district chiefs, were composed of representatives of the national police, the military staffs, the Revolutionary Development cadres, the Chieu Hoi program, and other pacification and security agencies. These committees were supposed to develop detailed plans for attacking the VCI in their areas of responsibility. The committees also oversaw the work of the Province Intelligence Operations Coordinating Center (PIOCC) and the District Intelligence Operations Coordinating Centers (DIOCCs). These centers, staffed primarily by the police and the military, were to assemble information from all agencies into dossiers on individual VCI members and then plan and coordinate operations against them. The American province senior advisor had a Phoenix coordinator on his staff to assist the Vietnamese agencies, and the PIOCC and DIOCCs had U.S. advisors, usually Army intelligence officers, assigned by CORDS. Each American district senior advisor acted as Phoenix coordinator for his district.*[21]

*Initially, most U.S. funding and support came from the CIA, but in 1969 CORDS took responsibility for financial support and the provision of advisors in the field while the CIA continued to work with the program at the national level. IDA Pacification Study, 2, pp. 91-95.

In its achievements and failures, Phoenix/Phung Hoang in Quang Nam mirrored many features of the nationwide program. The effort gave rise to much activity. Colonel Tin, the province chief, took strong interest in it. In June, he called a special province-wide meeting of Americans and Vietnamese involved in Phoeinx/Phung Hoang to discuss accomplishments and deficiencies and exhort them to further action and improvement. Following the national plan, the authorities in Quang Nam used leaflets, wanted posters, and even radio and television spots, to enlist citizen support, and they began organizing intelligence coordinating centers in the villages.[22]

All this activity, while impressive on paper, added up to much less than the intensive, coordinated campaign envisioned in Phoenix/Phung Hoang plans and directives. While Colonel Tin supported the program with apparently sincere enthusiasm, all too many of his GVN subordinates gave it little more than lip service. In most of the districts, according to an American advisor, the district chiefs visited their DIOCCs "only to escort visiting US VIP's who express an interest in Phoenix/Phung Hoang."[23] Some of the Vietnamese officials were preoccupied with conventional military operations; others seemed to the Americans to be restrained by taut live-and-let-live arrangements with high-ranking VCI; still others were themselves secret VC agents or sympathizers.

Partly as a result of this lack of continuing command interest, the DIOCCs often were short of trained personnel. The staffs of many centers acted more as keepers of archives than as directors and coordinators of active operations. They diligently assembled and filed dossiers, but rarely used them to mount hunts for particular VCI members. Further weakening the DIOCCs, the national police force, which was supposed to coordinate all anti-VCI operations, was undermanned, low in status among GVN agencies, and heavily VC-infiltrated. The GVN member agencies of the DIOCCs often withheld vital information from them in order to assure themselves credit for successfully exploiting it. Vietnamese administrative habits further compounded the program's difficulties. The principal objective of Phoenix/Phung Hoang was to secure cooperation between the lower level military and civilian officials who knew most about the VCI and could go after them most effectively. This entire concept ran counter to the strictly vertical and hierarchical Vietnamese administrative tradition, under which any dealings by a subordinate with anyone but his su-

perior, and indeed any taking of initiative by a subordinate, were regarded at best with suspicion.[24]

In spite of these limitations, Phoenix/Phung Hoang did involve most elements of the GVN in Quang Nam to some degree in the fight against the VCI. The Marines, when they could, tried to assist and often to intensify the campaign. In doing so, they acted in accord with the III MAF/ICTZ Combined Campign Plan for 1970, which required allied regulars and RFs and PFs to assist Phoenix/Phung Hoang both in intelligence gathering and in apprehending suspects. Free World military forces, including the Marines, were to station liaison officers at the PIOCC and DIOCCs and were to transmit to the intelligence centers any information they acquired on the VCI. They were to provide troops for operations against the VCI "to the maximum consistent with the tactical situation" and to give the campaign against the infrastructure equal priority with attacks on enemy main forces and base areas.[25]

Marine units sometimes went after the VCI directly in specifically targeted operations. During the summer and fall of 1970, for example, the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, which had no enemy main forces to fight in its heavily populated TAOR south of Marble Mountain, directed much of its effort against the VCI. The battalion emphasized surprise attacks and imaginative tactics, with significant results. In August, elements of the battalion, in a quick helicopter raid, captured or killed most of the VCI leadership of the enemy's *District III Da Nang*. Three months later, following up a lead acquired from the girl friend of a Regional Forces intelligence sergeant, Marines of the battalion ambushed and destroyed a veteran VC

As part of the civic action program two Marines struggle to throw a bull so that a Navy corpsman can give a shot of penicillin to the animal which is suffering from pneumonia. Usually the corpsmen are more concerned with the health of the villagers.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A194695

propaganda team which had long eluded allied pursuit.[26]

Operations against enemy military forces and base areas also yielded incidental gains against the VCI. Cordon and search operations led to arrests of suspected VCI agents as well as to the death or capture of enemy main force soldiers and guerrillas. Even sweeps of mountain base areas occasionally resulted in damage to the VCI. On 13 July, for instance, Company H of the 7th Marines, during an operation in the Que Son Mountains, trapped a group of enemy in a cave and captured or killed all of them. The group turned out to have been the entire Communist leadership of a village, who had gone into the hills for an indoctrination meeting. Operation Imperial Lake, besides accomplishing its main purpose of disrupting enemy base areas and infiltration routes, also hurt the VCI. On 5 November, Company B, 5th Marines discovered in a cache of documents the central files of the Viet Cong Security Section for Quang Nam Province. These files, supplemented by interrogation of a high-ranking VC official also captured during Imperial Lake, produced the names of Viet Cong who had infiltrated the GVN in Da Nang. Government authorities as a result arrested many well-placed enemy agents.*[27]

Late in 1970, the 1st Marines staff, at the instigation of the regimental S-2, Major Grinalds, who earlier in the year had served as S-3 of the regiment's 2d Battalion, developed an ambitious plan for a combined attack on the VCI by all military and civil elements in Quang Nam. The plan called for immediate formation of a joint intelligence center for the province to supplement and practically replace the PIOCC. Located at Hoi An, the center would contain liaison officers and communication teams from the 1st Marine Division, the 2d ROKMC Brigade, the 51st ARVN Regiment, QDSZ, Phoenix/Phung Hoang, and the CIA. Here, the 1st Marines staff hoped, "the information would develop on the VCI, the targets would be put in front of the commanders, and they could go." The 1st Marines' plan envisioned a concentrated drive against the infrastructure by all military forces in the province during the first four months of 1971. This effort, it was hoped, would temporarily cripple the enemy command and logistic system and prevent the Communists from taking the offensive after most of the Marines withdrew in the spring and early summer. The plan urged general adoption of tactics used profitably during 1970 by the 1st Marines. These included small-scale, surprise cordon and search operations, establishment of checkpoints on all major roads, and census operations like those conducted by the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines north of Da Nang.

After Colonel Paul X. Kelley, the 1st Marines commander, approved the plan, the regimental staff, in a series of briefings, tried to persuade the other American and Vietnamese headquarters in the province to adopt it. Results were meager. During December, the allies in Quang Nam did establish a Combined Intelligence Conference which brought together representatives from all allied intelligence agencies in the province at periodic meetings. The Phung Hoang organization acted as the permanent secretariat of the conference. Beyond this, most commands were too preoccupied with other missions and commitments to support the total anti-VCI campaign proposed by the 1st Marines. After initial expressions of interest, they allowed the plan to die of neglect.[28]

Marines trying to operate against the VCI and to persuade the GVN to make a greater effort against the underground faced many obstacles and frustrations. The continuing shortage of Vietnamese-speaking Marines, especially in units in the field, hampered the gathering of information. Under the rules of engagement, Marines could not arrest civilian suspects. Hence any unit going after VCI had to have Vietnamese police or Regional or Popular Forces attached. This in turn required consultations and arrangements with Vietnamese headquarters during which information about the forthcoming operation all too often leaked to the VC. The Vietnamese persistently ignored American suggestions that they establish more checkpoints to prevent the enemy from moving men and equipment along the allies' own lines of communication, and they resisted as politically unpopular the adoption of effective controls over private distributors of food, medical supplies, and other material needed by the enemy. Major Grinalds reported that:

> There's a man named Nom Yu, who works on the People's Revolutionary Party of *Quang Da Zone*, a very important man, who drives up and down Highway 1 on a red Honda, and he's been stopped on numerous occasions at checkpoints and bluffed his way through, either as a district chief or a village chief. He's got about six sets of ID cards he carries. The point I'm trying to make is our attempt to monitor the VCI traffic of both their ordnance, their supplies, and their people through our own means of communication is very, very poor . . .[29]

*See the description of this incident in Chapter 6 together with statement by Lieutenant General Bernard E. Trainor in the informational footnote.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A194078

BGen Mauro J. Padalino, Commanding General, Force Logistic Command presents a plaque to the Marine-sponsored Hoa Khanh Children's Hospital.

Even with conventional military contact declining, both American and ARVN military commands proved reluctant to reorient their operations toward eradicating the VCI. Marines, Koreans, ARVN, and militia alike thought in terms of engaging large units and taking a measurable toll of dead, prisoners, and captured material. Anti-VCI operations involved slow, careful stalking of individuals and often produced no immediately visible result. Coordinating itelligence collection and the response to it was a continual struggle, explained Grinalds:

> The problem was somehow getting the folks who had the information about the VCI together with the folks who had the forces to operate against them, and it's amazing how often these two groups operate without ever coming together. . . . Every once in a while they will find a certain community of interest which allows them to come together and the forces to operate against the VCI, but it's unfortunately too seldom . . . [30]

Civic Action, 1970

Almost as soon as Marines arrived in I Corps in force in 1965, they began trying to help the civilians among whom they were fighting. The Marines acted from a number of motives, and these same motives in 1970 continued to impel the III MAF civic action program. From the beginning, Marines had believed that by providing food, relief supplies, and medical care, they would win friends and gratitude among the Vietnamese, and that from friendship and gratitude would flow information about the Viet Cong and increased support for the GVN. As pacification programs developed, civic action contributed to them by promoting economic and social improvement, thus giving more people a stake in the existing system. Further, as a III MAF staff officer put it, "Civic action also can be useful as an outlet for the energies of U.S. troops. In a counter-guerrilla war such as this, much time is spent in pre- and post-combat conditions. . . . In this environment civic action . . . can serve usefully to expend excess time and energy."[31]

By 1970, the III MAF civic action program had grown from sporadic acts of charity into a large-scale effort, coordinated by the G-5 and S-5 staffs and closely integrated with GVN pacification and development plans. The G-5, like his tactical partner, the G-3, coordinated his activities with numerous other organizations and agencies, both U.S. and foreign. He maintained close working relationships with four separate U.S. Army organizations, two U.S. Air Force organizations, CORDS advisors, ARVN, the province and district officials, III MAF, and numerous free world and Vietnamese civilian agencies.[32]

The civic action program which the G-5 conducted, emphasized helping the Vietnamese to help themselves. Villagers in Marine areas of operation were supposed to determine their own needs, whether they be a new school, a well, a market place, or an irrigation ditch. Then the Marines would furnish supplies—drawn from their own resources, from AID, or from private charities Marines would also provide technical assistance and some labor. The villagers would furnish most of the labor and as much of the material as they could. As Vietnamese local governments developed, the Marines tried to involve them in every project, often restricting their own efforts to helping villagers obtain aid from the GVN.

G-5 operations ranged far beyond helping the Vietnamese to help themselves with American material and technical assistance, however. Through the "Save the Leg" program, dud rounds and unexpended explosives were purchased from the Vietnamese civilians in an attempt to reduce the incidence of Marine patrols encountering mines and boobytraps. The Voluntary Information Program encouraged the populace to provide information about the enemy for a price, the dollar value of which was made proportionate to the importance of the intelligence provided. The G-5 taxed the capabilities of the 7th Psychological Operations Battalion, USA, employing

its leaflet drops, airborne public address missions, and HB (ground broadcast) and HE (audiovisual) means to undermine the activities of the enemy. The Personal Response section of the G-5 conducted varied activities to foster better relations between Vietnamese and Marines through language classes, symposiums, and cultural tours. Psychological operations relied heavily on Vietnamese capabilities: Armed Propaganda Teams; Cultural Drama Teams; and Politcal Warfare Teams. The G-5 was also supported by two platoons of the 29th Civil Affairs Company, USA, in his wide-ranging activities.

In addition to the numerous on-going tasks assigned the G-5, he responded to requests from province officials to coordinate military involvement of refugee resettlement, such as at Nhon Cau, Tu Cau, Phu Loc (6), and Go Noi Island, and he also coordinated American support for natural disasters which struck within the province. During the catastrophic flood which occurred from 29 October to 3 November 1970, for example, the G-5 coordinated American efforts in the relief operations. From the rescue and evacuation of Vietnamese to delivery of food and clothing to beleaguered areas, the G-5 coordinated all support. In the first few days alone, 190,000 pounds of foodstuffs were distributed outside the Hoi An area. Another 5,000 pounds of clothing and cloth for clothing and some 4,000 paper or canvas blankets were distributed in this same area. The Vietnamese later lauded the support provided by the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and the 1st Marine Division under the supervision of the G-5.[33]

In 1970 III MAF, in keeping with the general emphasis of redeployment and turning the war over to the Vietnamese, concentrated on reducing its civic action program. It did so partly as a matter of policy and partly because available manpower and resources were diminishing. The III MAF/I Corps Combined Campaign Plan for 1970 restricted Marine civic action to assisting the Vietnamese Armed Forces in aiding the people. It authorized direct American participation only when a project exceeded the technical capabilities of the RVNAF, when a project "is essential to the success of a tactical operation . . . or is required for humanitarian reasons and cannot be accomplished by the RVNAF," or when a useful project had been started before implementation of the plan.[34]

During the year, the manpower, funds, and materials available to III MAF for civic action steadily declined. Troop redeployments led to the termination of unit civic action projects, and the withdrawal of the force engineer battalions in Keystone Robin Alpha curtailed road improvement and other large-scale activities. U.S. aid agencies, as their own budgets were reduced, correspondingly reduced the money and material allotted to III MAF. Throughout the war, the Marines had relied for school and medical kits, scholarship funds, and other civic action resources on money contributed by members and friends of the Marine Corps Reserve. This money went to the established relief agency, CARE, which purchased the commodities and shipped them to Da Nang for the use of III MAF. As troops redeployed and American public interest in the war waned, these contributions also declined. Partially compensating for these losses, redeploying units often left material behind which could be salvaged for civic action.[35]

As the III MAF G-5, Colonel Clifford J. Peabody, put it, "the name of the game was to phase down, so we did it with somewhat of a vengeance."[36] On 30 May, for example, III MAF ended, for lack of funds, the General Walt Scholarship Program under which it had helped finance the secondary and college education of Vietnamese youths. The Force Logistic Command on 30 June transferred administration and operational control of its largest civic action project, the Hoa Khanh Children's Hospital near Da Nang, to the World Relief Commission. Built with thousands of man-hours of volunteer labor by Marines and sustained by over $300,000 in contributions from servicemen and concerned persons in the U.S., this hospital by mid-1970 had grown from a small roadside dispensary into a fully equipped, modern 120-bed pediatric facility. The hospital even had a dental clinic, the equipment for which had been donated by dentists in the United States. "The personnel were mostly young native women who had been trained by Navy dentists for several years," recalled Captain Meredith H. Mead, USN, commander of the 1st Dental Company. "An oral surgeon from the 1st Dental Company went out there one day per week to perform cleft palate and hare lip operations."[37] The World Relief Commission would operate the hospital until its eventual transfer to South Vietnamese management, and Force Logistic Command would provide limited support as long as it remained in-country.[38]

The story of a second major Marine hospital project, the 3d Marine Division Memorial Children's Hospital in Quang Tri, ended less happily. Early in 1969, the 3d Marine Division had developed plans for

this hospital, a 10-building, 120-bed facility which would meet a significant need in northern I Corps and stand as a memorial to Marines and sailors who had died in Vietnam. Through friends and organizations in the United States, the Marines had begun collecting funds for the hospital. The 3d Engineer Battalion and Naval Mobile Construction (Seabee) Battalion 128 were supposed to do the actual building, aided by the government of Quang Tri Province, which would provide bricks and much of the labor.

Evaluating the failure of the project years later, Colonel Peabody said, "Here was a project conceived in the loftiest humanitarian ideals but in violation of all rules for effective civic action. The end speaks for itself." According to Peabody, the GVN opposed the project and recommended that the money collected be invested, as the Vietnamese desired, to upgrade or add to the present province hospital. Peabody added that the "3d Marine Division committed the Marine Corps to this project knowing, as a minimum, that the Vietnamese were less than enthusiastic and that the more knowledgeable advisory personnel recommended against it. FMFPac recommended that it not be undertaken until positive arrangements had been made for staffing."[39]

When the 3d Marine Division withdrew late in 1969, it left responsibility for completing the project to III MAF. Colonel Peabody soon found that with the departure of the Marine division, support for the hospital had disappeared. The U.S. forces left in northern I Corps lacked resources to complete it. The Quang Tri Province Government informed III MAF that it would not be able to staff or maintain a children's hospital and would like to use the six partially completed buildings for other purposes. Only $135,000 of the estimated $470,000 needed to complete the project as a children's hospital had been collected in the U.S. In June, because of the hospital's uncertain future, the Commandant of the Marine Corps prohibited any solicitation of additional funds for it.

On 20 August, Colonel Peabody met at Quang Tri with the G-5 officers of XXIV Corps and the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division, the Quang Tri Province Chief, and representatives of the provincial health service, the Red Cross, and the Buddhist social services in an effort to salvage as much of the project as possible. The American and Vietnamese officials agreed that the existing structures should be finished for use as a combination orphanage, maternity clinic, and dormitory for secondary school students. During the rest of the year, III MAF used the money in the children's hospital fund to prepare and equip the buildings for these purposes and to improve the pediatric wing of the existing Quang Tri Province hospital. III MAF used an additional $3,500 per month of its dwindling civic action funds to pay the salaries of Vietnamese doctors and nurses at a temporary children's hospital in Quang Tri, also started by the 3d Division and now being partially supported by elements of the 67th U.S. Army Medical Group. XXIV Corps provided Army engineers to help finish the buildings at the former children's hospital, and U.S. Army Support Command, Da Nang allowed III MAF to purchase the necessary lumber. By early 1971, the orphanage/clinic/dormitory was nearing completion. While III MAF thus had been able to salvage something beneficial from the 3d Division's aborted plans, Colonel Peabody justifiably concluded that "a project which was outstanding in its humanitarian idea of providing help . . . has proved to be a real albatross in the long run."[40]

In spite of the emphasis on reducing civic action commitments, Marine units continued helping the Vietnamese who lived in their TAORs or near their camps and bases. Typical of the efforts, the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, during April, began turning surplus lumber over to the Dai Loc District Chief, who distributed it to villages and hamlets for self-help projects. Companies of the battalion stationed at Hills 65, 25, and 52 gave empty ammunition boxes to the people of Loc Quang village to construct desks for their new school and furnished school supply kits and a blackboard. The Marines also helped the villagers of Loc Quang build a culvert to carry irrigation water under Route 4. Three times a week, members of the battalion taught English at Dai Loc District High School. The battalion sponsored an intrascholastic volley ball game and gave 250 books to a Catholic priest, Father Huong, who planned to open a public library in Dai Loc. The battalion aid station routinely conducted two MedCaps a week, each usually attracting about 50 patients, most of them children.[41]

Civic action was not confined to infantry units. Besides sponsoring the Hoa Khanh Children's Hospital, the Force Logistic Command at various times aided 32 hamlets and helped support 11 schools, 6 orphanages, and 3 churches. The 1st MAW maintained a demonstration chicken farm with a flock of White Leghorns that by September 1970 had grown to 225 hens and 40 roosters. The Marines sold hatched chicks to Vietnamese farmers at half the going local price in

the hope of encouraging more villagers to raise poultry. Each of the air wing's aircraft groups had its own education, health, and construction projects in hamlets around the fields at Marble Mountain and Da Nang.[42]

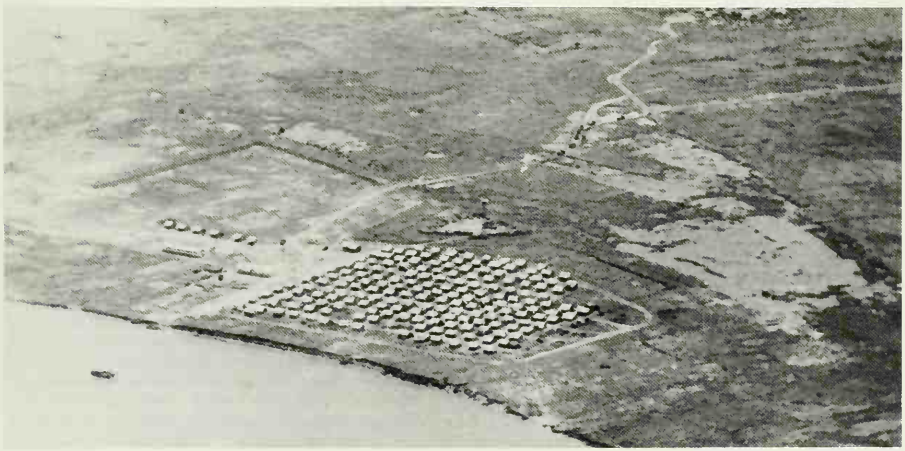
Just before the Keystone Robin Alpha redeployments began, the 1st Marine Division joined the Quang Nam Province Government in an effort to resettle Go Noi Island. Located about 15 miles south of Da Nang and the channels through which the Thu Bon River (there known as the Ky Lam) meandered toward the sea, Go Noi, before the war, had been a fertile rice, cotton, and silk producing area inhabited by some 27,000 Vietnamese. As the war expanded, the Viet Cong honeycombed the area with caves and tunnels and used it as a base of operations against Da Nang. VC depredations, allied sweeps, and a series of floods soon drove most of the residents of Go Noi into Quang Nam's growing refugee camps. Between May and November of 1969, in Operation Pipestone Canyon, the 1st Marines, assisted by elements of the 51st ARVN Regiment and the 2d ROKMC Brigade, expelled most of the NVA and VC from Go Noi Island. Then the allies brought in heavy earthmoving equipment which swept 6,700 acres clean of underbrush and crushed or buried the Communists' network of tunnels and fortification.

During Operation Pipestone Canyon, the 1st Marine Division proposed a plan for resettling Go Noi Island after it had been cleared of the enemy. The plan had obvious advantages. Repopulation of the area with pro-GVN civilians protected by adequate territorial forces would make Communist reinfiltration more difficult. The area could provide homes and livelihoods for thousands of refugees, and resumption of agriculture there would contribute to economic revival in Quang Nam. CORDS at regional and national levels took an interest in the Marine plan and further studied and refined it. The concerned GVN ministries indicated interest. Then, as so often happened in Vietnam, activity on the project temporarily ceased.

In the spring of 1970, Colonel Tin, the Quang Nam Province Chief, revised the idea. He began a small resettlement project with assistance from the 1st Marine Division and the Korean Brigade. Late in May, Colonel Tin abruptly decided to expand this modest effort into the full-scale resettlement campaign originally contemplated. He proposed to move 17,000 people into three new villages on Go Noi Island before the end of the summer and asked XXIV Corps for aid. Even though most of Go Noi Island lay within the Korean Marines' TAOR, Lieutenant General Zais, then the XXIV Corps commander, directed the 1st Marine Division, as the major allied ground command in Quang Nam, to coordinate American assistance for

An aerial view of the new refugee resettlement village on Go Noi Island. Go Noi, a former bastion of the Viet Cong, was one of the most fought-over areas south of Da Nang. This was an attempt to bring new residents into the area loyal to the government.

Marine Corps Historical Collection



the project. Major General Widdecke in turn placed his assistant division commandet, Brigadier General William F. Doehler, in chatge. Making much use of the Quang Da Special Zone weekly conferences, the 1st Marine Division quickly worked out with the Korean Marines, the ARVN, and the province government detailed plans for a large-scale civil and military effort.[43]

Construction of the new villages began in May, with most of the available Marine engineet units and Navy construction battalions committed to the task. By the time the Marine engineers were withdtawn for tedeployment on 21 July, they had ploughed 800 acres of farm land and wholly or partially constructed 8,000 meters of road and two fortified village compounds. To improve the settlers' access to markets, the Marine engineers installed a 346-foot pontoon bridge connecting the island to the main highways, and the Seabees improvised a 440-foot permanent bridge from salvaged materials. III MAF contributed an assortment of building supplies to the project including 351 3,000-foot rolls of barbed wite, 16,000 engineering stakes, 30,000 sandbags, a 55-foot aluminum watchtower, 26 tons of gtavel, and two flagpoles. To help the settlets construct their own houses, the Matines salvaged ovet 400,000 board feet of dunnage* lumbet and set up a mobile sawmill to cut it into usable sizes. From this wood, each family purchased enough for their home from the village council, which retained the money for use in local projects.[44]

To defend the settlets against the Viet Cong, the 2d CAG organized a new oversized CAP (22 Marines and a PF platoon) to work with a three-company RF group and elements of the Korean btigade. Plans called for the CAP, formed with Marines from deactivated units of the 1st CAG, to conduct mobile operations on the edges of the inhabited areas while the RF units provided close in protection and the Koreans continued their usual patrols and ambushes.[45]

By the end of August, the Go Noi settlements appeared to be well established, although the results had fallen far shott of the ambitious goals of the original plan. Phu Loc, the first of the three villages to be founded, had over 1,500 inhabitants (most of them prewar residents of Go Noi) and 300 homes. Nine wells were producing "excellent" water, and the inhabitants had begun building their community hall, school, dispensary, and market place. The second village, Phu Phong, had almost 200 houses under construction and 40 families in permanent residence. The October floods slowed work on these two villages and prevented establishment of the third, but by the end of the year about 2,000 people were living on Go Noi Island. They had begun farming and were planning to otganize a cooperative to build an irtigation system. Encouraged by the tesults of the Go Noi project, the province government had begun resettling more refugees in new communities along Route 4. Neither of these projects by itself came neat solving Quang Nam's refugee problem, but they did indicate what could be done by a determined, unified allied effort. Unfortunately, the 1st Marine Division, which had provided much of the impetus and coordination, did not have long to remain in Vietnam.[46]

As the Matines came to the end of their last full year of civic action, many problems remained unsolved and questions unanswered.[47] In spite of the emphasis in plans and directives on helping the Vietnamese do what the Vietnamese wanted done, many Marines, with their American aggressiveness and desite for accomplishment, still tried to impose their own projects on the villagers. Even the CAPs sometimes erred in this manner. In July, the 2d CAG reported that:

> Efforts such as building bulletin boards . . . and programs for trash collection and general police of hamlet areas continue, but [meet] with limited success at best due to no teal interest by local populace. Herein lies a major problem . . . that continues to plague civic action projects. CAP Matines with limited assets continue to push projects through without thotough integration (via the Village/Hamlet Officials) with the immediate needs and desires of the people they serve. 2d CAG efforts to educate and improve continue.[48]

Overeager Marines sometimes committed themselves to projects which they and their Vietnamese hosts lacked the resources to finish. In the 3d CAG, for example, members of a CAP squad in a coastal hamlet near Hue decided their hamlet should have a dispensary. Colonel Peabody described the results of their effort:

> . . . They've wtitten to their friends back in the States and their friends had started donating money, and they hired Vietnamese labor and they started building a dispensary . . . about three times larget than was needed, but they were going to go first class, and the people back in the States were donating hospital beds and end tables and so forth . . . . Well, . . . the hamlet got upgraded [on the HES] to an A ot a B hamlet, and the CAP was pulled out, and so when we finally sent somebody up there to find out what had happened to this thing, here was four more or less incomplete walls, and that was it. And the local people wanted to know, "Well, whatever happened to our dispensary?"[49]

*Dunnage is scrap lumber used in bracing cargo in ships' holds.

Colonel Peabody's office, after consultations with the Vietnamese province and district authorities, the CORDS advisors, and the XXIV Corps staff, developed a plan under which the Vietnamese would finish building the dispensary.

> . . . But they asked us for . . . basically $1,000 worth of gear to finish it up, primarily lumber . . . . So everything was all laid on and we bought the supplies and got them shipped up there, and that's been about three months ago. And the supplies are in the warehouse and nothing has moved since . . . .[50]

Beyond the practical problems, the question remained of how effective civic action had been in winning civilian support for the South Vietnamese government and acceptance for the Marines. Limited benefits could be observed. Frequently, after a MedCap or other project that had helped them immediately and personally, villagers would point out boobytraps to the Marines or warn them of impending enemy attacks. Major Grinalds, S-2 of the 1st Marines, for example, found MedCaps* "very effective" in producing intelligence. "We always had an intelligence man sitting by the dentist or the doctor when he was working on somebody," Grinalds recalled, "and in gratitude for a tooth pulled . . . or something like that, sometimes they'd give some information about VCI or VC in their area."[51]

But had five years of civic action really overcome the inevitable hostility of the peasants to foreign troops in their midst or won their loyalty for a government that still often seemed less concerned for their welfare than were the Marines. Knowledgeable Marines could give no definitive answer to this question. Some, including Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, the assistant division commander of the 1st Marine Division during its last months in Vietnam,** expressed "serious doubts" whether civic action had won many "hearts and minds" for the government and regarded such activities as "a poor substitute for more positive forms of civil affairs/military government."[52]

*The dental officers and technicians of the 1st Dental Company, which operated 12 clinics throughout the Da Nang TAOR, supported Marine civic action efforts. Even the dental officers who were assigned to the 1st Marine Division command post went to the field on occasion. "All dental officers and techs operated from time to time in MedCAP or DentCAP endeavors. These were carried out in orphanages, schools or small villages. We always took a translator and armed guard," recalled Captain Meredith H. Mead, Commanding Officer, 1st Dental Company. "I personally went on several of these expeditions . . . . One trip I remember well; we set up our chair in the small village square and the chief (village chief) climbed a tree and announced with a big megaphone that the tooth doctor had arrived. Our treatments were mostly for relief of pain." Capt Meredith H. Mead, USN, Comments on draft ms, 8Jun73 (Vietnam Comment File).

**Simmons replaced Brigadier General Doehler as assistant division commander on 16 June 1970.

Communist Counter-Pacification Efforts

While large-unit combat diminished during 1970, the Communists, in keeping with their renewed emphasis on guerrilla warfare, continued without let-up their effort to disrupt pacification by terrorism. This small-scale but often vicious campaign took three main forms: direct attacks on CAPs, CUPPs, and RF or PF units; kidnapping and assassination of GVN officials, PSDF members, national policemen, RD cadre members, and other pacification functionaries; and general attacks on the people and their property in GVN-controlled areas.

Especially during the first half of the year, detachments of VC and NVA repeatedly attacked CAP units. On 1 February, for example, 30-40 NVA and VC trapped and overran a patrol from CAP 1-1-3 in Quang Tin Province, killing four Marines and one PF and capturing a radio, a M60 machine gun, a grenade launcher, and five M16s. The enemy also took losses. A sweep of the scene of the fight by elements of CAP 1-1-2 disclosed five enemy dead, three abandoned AK-47s, and a Chinese Communist machine gun.[53] During March, the 2d CAG in Quang Nam reported "constant" small attacks by fire on its units. On one occasion, the enemy disguised themselves in captured ARVN uniforms, 48 of which were found after the engagement, the Communists having stripped them off and discarded them as they fled.[54]

Periodically, enemy infantry or sappers tried to overrun a CAP patrol base. Almost invariably, they failed with substantial losses. On 27 May, in a typical contact, 30-50 NVA attacked the night patrol base of CAP 4-2-1 near the Quang Tri-Thua Thien border with small arms, grenades, and RPGs. The CAP Marines and PFs, supported by 81mm mortar fire, helicopter gunships, and flareships, held off the enemy with small arms, grenades, and Claymore mines. Sporadic fighting continued from 0125 until daylight, when the NVA withdrew. They left behind two dead, an AK-47, and five blood trails. The CAP suffered one Marine seriously wounded and one PF dead of wounds. During the last half of the year, the enemy launched fewer such attacks and relied increasingly on mines and boobytraps to inflict casualties on the CAPs.[55]

Enemy pressure on CUPP units intensified late in the spring as the combined units began improving

their effectiveness. On 10 May, for instance, the Communists attacked two separate 7th Marines CUPP teams near FSB Baldy, mortaring one and assaulting the compound of the other. In the ground attack, Marines and PFs drove back about 60 sappers who temporarily broke into their perimeter. This day's action cost the enemy 12 dead; The two CUPP units lost between them one PF killed and 20 wounded.[56]

On 13 June, the enemy inflicted a major setback on the 5th Marines' CUPP platoon. At 0200, about 60 NVA and VC attacked two ambushes set up by this unit near Route 4 about a mile southwest of Hill 25. Concentrating first on the westernmost position, the Communists assaulted with small arms and machine gun fire, RPGs, grenades, and thrown satchel charges. All the RFs in the ambush, members of a platoon from the 759th RF Company, fled at the first shots, leaving six Marines to fight alone until they were overrun. Three of the Marines were killed and another wounded; the survivors made their way to safety.

The enemy then moved eastward and attacked the second ambush. Here, all but five of the RFs fled, but here the Marines and the RFs who stayed, supported by 81mm mortar and artillery fire, stopped the Communists. The enemy disengaged and withdrew around 0430.

For the 5th Marines' CUPP platoon, it had been a costly action. Besides a total of three Marines and one RF soldier killed and five Marines and one RF wounded, the unit had lost in the overrun position a PRC-25 radio, an M60 machine gun, two M14 and two M16 rifles, and a .45-caliber pistol. A patrol from Company I, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines searched the area the next morning and found two blood trails but no other sign of enemy casualties. The most important casualty of the engagement was the relationship between the CUPP Marines and their RF counterparts. As the official report of the fight put it: "The rapport between RFs and Marines was impaired by the performance of the RFs during these contacts." Nevertheless, the 5th Marines at once set to work rebuilding the unit and improving its training.[57]

Throughout the year, Communist terrorists took a steady toll of GVN officials and ordinary civilians. In May, one of the periodic high points of guerrilla activity, the VC in Quang Nam, according to a CORDS report, killed 129 civilians, wounded 247, and kidnapped 73.[58] Many such kidnappings in fact were forceable recruiting. The VC took the victims into the hills and by persuasion or coercion induced them to join their ranks. The GVN, as it did with the number of refugees, understated its casualties from terrorism. Major Grinalds reported that "government officials get a target number of harassing or terrorist incidents that are allowed in their province each year, [it] might be 75, might be 85. When they reach that number they stop reporting the excess, because it looks bad."[59]

District and village officials lived under constant danger of abduction or death. On the night of 20-21 March, for instance, a band of VC kidnapped a hamlet chief in the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines TAOR. They took him up onto Charlie Ridge about 1,500 meters north of his hamlet, told him "to quit his job or he would be killed," then released him and retreated further into the mountains.[60]

On other occasions, the enemy struck to kill. On 19 September, in a type of incident which occurred again and again during the year, two Regional Force soldiers died less than half a mile from the headquarters compound of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines when "an unknown number of VC/VNA detonated one Claymore type mine and then shot them in the head." Eight days later, also in the 2d Battalion's TAOR, Viet Cong grenades killed two Revolutionary Development team members in a refugee hamlet and wounded four civilians. In the Que Son Valley on 14 November, two or three VC with AK-47s ambushed and killed the hamlet chief and hamlet security chief of Lanh Thuong (5), a community close to FSB Ross. Higher ranking officials also fell victim. On 18 December, in midafternoon, the assistant chief of Dai Loc District was killed on Route 4 by two Vietnamese boys who threw a grenade into his jeep.[61]

The enemy reinforced his terrorist campaign with continuous propaganda to further intimidate the Vietnamese population, and occasionally he leveled his propaganda at the American forces. A typical propaganda leaflet said, "GIs, unite! Oppose the dirty American war of aggression in Vietnam! The American people are waging an active struggle to support your anti-var (sic) activities and demand that the American government end immediately its war of aggression in Vietnam and take you out of South Vietnam immediately." Further on in the leaflet it appealed for racial dissidence against the war: "Black GIs, refuse to fight against the South Vietnamese people struggling for their independence and freedom. For black GIs, the battlefield is right on American soil, where they must fight against poverty, hunger and barbarous racial discrimination." While the propaganda

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373320

South Vietnamese troops from the 101st Regional Force Battalion deploy from an American helicopter in an operation south of Da Nang. As the Marine forces began to withdraw from Vietnam, they turned over their tactical areas to the South Vietnamese.

had little or no impact on Americans, the enemy's propaganda and terrorism often stifled the Vietnamese.[62]

Any Vietnamese who supported the government or associated with Americans in any way was a potential victim of Communist terror. Early in 1970, a CAP from the 1st CAG, while on a routine patrol, found a dead man on the trail they were following. According to the patrol report:

> The dead VN was the father of a young boy who frequently performed small chores to assist the CAP Marines. A note in Vietnamese attached to the body read, "If you support the Americans, this will happen to you"[63]

To the north, in Quang Nam, a group of school children learned the same lesson. On 19 January, while Marines from CAP 2-3-7 were playing volleyball with the children in their schoolyard, a Vietnamese youth threw two grenades into their midst. The grenades killed four of the children and wounded four others and six Marines. The youth who threw the grenades escaped. These and innumerable other such small tragedies conveyed the same message: it is dangerous to aid and associate with Americans.[64]

During the spring and summer, the VC escalated their terrorism from acts of violence against individuals to full-scale attacks on progovernment villages. The most severe of these attacks occurred on 11 June at Phu Thanh. This village, a complex of several hamlets, straddled Route 1 about three miles north of FSB Baldy. Just to the north of the village, the highway crossed the Ba Ren Bridge, one of the vital links on the land lines of communication between Baldy and Da Nang.[65]

Phu Thanh had a reputation among the Marines as a friendly village. It contained the homes of many RF and PF soldiers and GVN officials, and its people were a reliable source of information about the VC in their area. Because of its nearness to the important bridge, Phu Thanh had strong security forces in and around it. CUPP Team 9—a squad from the 1st Platoon of Company A, 7th Marines—was stationed in the village with PF Platoons 144 and 171. Phu Thanh

also contained a 22-man Revolutionary Development team and a PSDF unit of 31 members, eight of whom had weapons. Near the south end of the bridge lay the compound of the 323d RF Company, which had as its main mission protection of the span. The CP of the 1st Platoon of Company A, which had charge of several CUPPs along the highway north of LZ Baldy, was located near the RF compound.

For several weeks, rumors had circulated in the village that the Viet Cong were planning to attack the Ba Ren Bridge, but neither Marines nor Vietnamese saw any reason to expect an assault on the hamlets themselves. On the night of 10-11 June, the CUPP unit had taken up a night position within the village. The RF troops, following their usual practice, remained in their fortified compound watching the bridge.

At 0200 on the 11th, the enemy, later identified as elements of the *V-25th Main Force Battalion* and the *T-89th Sapper Battalion*, launched a thoroughly planned and coordinated attack. It began with a barrage of 60mm and 82mm mortar fire. The mortars, located north and south of Phu Thanh, dropped a total of 200-250 high explosive and white phosphorus rounds on the village. They concentrated on CUPP 9, the bridge, the 1st Platoon CP, and the RF compound. Simultaneous with this barrage, the enemy attacked two other CUPP teams in hamlets south of Phu Thanh on Route 1, engaging them with small arms, RPGs, grenades, and mortars and preventing them from maneuvering to reinforce Phu Thanh.

Under cover of the mortar fire, two groups of sappers entered the village, one from the east and one from the west. Armed with grenades and satchel charges, a few rushed the RF compound and the 1st Platoon CP and were cut down by the defenders' fire. Most began burning houses and hurling their grenades and satchel charges into family bomb shelters filled with civilians who had fled to them for protection from the shelling. A Marine recalled:

> The enemy ran through the village, ordering people out of their bunkers. When they did [come out], they were shot, or else [the enemy threw] chicoms [grenades] into the bunker, killing the men, women, and children in them. . . . Very many civilians [were] killed just inside their bunkers, if it wasn't from shrapnel wounds it was from fire where they were burned to death from the satchel charges used . . .[66]

The defenders fought back as best they could, but the continuous mortar barrage prevented them from counterattacking to save the village. At the bridge, the RF company beat back a minor probe of its compound. CUPP 9 had 10 Marines wounded in the initial shelling, including the squad leader, the assistant squad leader, the radioman, and the corpsman. Nevertheless, the Marines and PFs managed to form a perimeter in the blazing village and hold their position. When it became evident that the enemy were concentrating their attack on the civilians and bypassing the CUPP, the PF *trung si* let most of his men go home to try to protect their families, but he himself stayed with the Marines, as did the PF radioman and mortar team.

At the 1st Platoon CP, Marines and PFs repelled a rush by a few of the sappers and answered the mortar barrage with their own 81mm and 60mm mortars. The platoon commander, First Lieutenant Thomas S. Miller, kept the 7th Marines Headquarters informed by radio of the progress of the battle and called for artillery and air support. The first rounds of friendly artillery began falling on suspected Communist positions 20 minutes after the attack started.

At about 0315, the enemy mortar fire temporarily slackened as the sappers began to withdraw from the village. Lieutenant Miller took advantage of the lull to send a squad from his CP into Phu Thanh to find and assist CUPP 9. To reach the CUPP, the squad had to work its way through a part of the village already devastated by the sappers. One of the Marines, Corporal Robert M. Mutchler, reported that "It was mostly on fire, the wounded were all over the area, screamin' and hollerin'."[67] The squad reached the CUPP team and in two trips brought the wounded Marines and PFs to the bridge to be picked up by helicopters. Then, accompanied by the platoon's Vietnamese interpreter, the squad plunged back into the burning hamlets and began urging the people to bring their wounded to the bridge. At the bridge, the interpreter and the Marines, "working very hard," separated the more severely injured and made the people understand that the more seriously hurt would be taken out first. By this time, the enemy mortars had resumed firing slowly to cover the retreat of the sappers.

The first medical evacuation helicopter from MAG-16 landed on the bridge around 0330 and lifted out all the Marines, PFs, and RFs wounded in the attack. Thereafter, a steady stream of helicopters came in, covered by two Cobra gunships, to take out the civilian wounded. According to Corporal Mutchler, "we medevaced some 60 to 70 civilians, and . . . more than half of them was emergency medevacs, amputees and half burnt to death." Lieutenant Miller said that:

> The pilots who came in to do the medevacing did the most outstanding job of any Marine pilots I've seen yet. They were coming in, some pilots came in, picked up part of a load and started to leave. When more came they sat back down, even when the zone was still relatively hot. . . . As one would pick up and leave another one would land . . . . I'm sure that they saved many lives that night.[68]

The mortar bombardment ended at about 0400, and by daylight all the severely wounded civilians had been evacuated and a team of doctors and corpsmen from LZ Baldy had reached Phu Thanh and had begun treating the minor casualties, over 100 in all. Colonel Derning, the 7th Marines commander, arrived at 0810 to assess the damage, followed at 1020 by Major General Widdecke. Within hours, the 1st Marine Division and the province government had emergency relief and reconstruction under way. The GVN, aided by the Marines, distributed food and supplies to meet the survivors' immediate needs and later provided tons of lumber and tin to rebuild the village.

There was much rebuilding to be done. The VC had destroyed 156 houses and damaged 35 more, most of them in Thanh My, the hardest hit of the village's hamlets. The attack had cost the Marines 10 men wounded, one of whom later died. Four Regional Force and two Popular Force soldiers had been wounded. Civilian casualties totalled 74 dead, many of them women and children; 60 severely injured; and over 100 lightly wounded. After the fight, the defenders found four dead VC in the wire around the RF compound and the 1st Platoon CP, and they rounded up one prisoner and one *Hoi Chanh*.

Soon after the attack, the Communists began spreading the report that their objective really had been the Ba Ren Bridge and that Phu Thanh and its people merely had been caught in the crossfire. Marines who had been there, however, had no doubt that the enemy deliberately had attacked the village. Lieutenant Miller summed up:

> There was no military objective involved in this attack. I say this because first of all there was only light enemy contact directly at the compound. The mortars were fired in such a manner as to restrain any military contact. The VC stayed pretty much out of the area CUPP 9 was operating in. . . . Also, the Ba Ren Bridge, which is a major line of communications on Route 1 was not hit; there was not even an attempt to blow this bridge up.[69]

On 30 August, the enemy launched a similar attack on a Buddhist orphanage and German hospital south of An Hoa. Again, the attack began with a mortar barrage. Then an estimated 30 NVA sappers "in full uniform" swept through the grounds hurling grenades and satchel charges and withdrawing before allied troops could arrive. They left behind 15 Vietnamese dead, many of them children, and 51 wounded.[70] The enemy, however, as their attempts to disavow the massacre at Phu Thanh indicated, evidently found such attacks politically embarrassing. During the autumn and winter they reverted to smaller scale and more selective terrorism.

Marines found Vietnamese civilian reaction to this violence varied and difficult to measure. At Phu Thanh, for instance, members of the CUPP felt that the attack of 11 June merely strengthened the villagers' loyalty to the GVN and friendship for the Marines. " They always gave us good intel [intelligence] before," one Marine observed, "and they're still giving us good intel now that it's over. . . . I just feel they [the enemy] turned the villagers against them, a lot more than they were before."[71] On the other hand, Major Grinalds concluded that the civilians in the 1st Marines' TAOR "have a high limit of tolerance to terror because, from what I've seen, they aren't ready yet to acknowledge that the threshold of pain had been reached and now they're ready to get rid of the VC."[72]

Vietnamization

"Vietnamization" entered the official vocabulary of U.S. military planning in November 1969, but the policy it denoted had been put into effect about a year before that. Essentially, Vietnamization involved enlargement of the size and improvement of the equipment, leadership, and training of the Vietnamese armed forces (RVNAF) to the point where they could defend their country with minimal U.S. support. This effort went forward under a series of RVNAF Improvement and Modernization Plans prepared by MACV and the JGS and approved by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff and Department of Defense. The initial plans in 1968-1969 emphasized expansion of ground force manpower, with training and equipment receiving secondary priority, while the plans in effect during 1970 stressed improvement of Vietnamese air, naval, artillery, and supply capabilities so as to produce balanced regular and Regional or Popular Forces of 1,100,000 men by the end of Fiscal Year 1973.[73]

Beyond development of the RVNAF, the definition of Vietnamization often included the whole range of efforts to turn more of the war over to the Vietnamese. The 1st Marine Division, for example, defined Vietnamization as "the process by which the United States assists the GVN in strengthening its government, econ-

omy, and military and internal security forces in order to permit the United States to reduce its military and civilian involvement." The division included in Vietnamization most military and pacification activities, and it enjoined every unit and staff section to pay continual attention to the Vietnamization aspects of their missions.[74]

In Quang Nam, the military Vietnamization effort during 1970 centered on expansion and improvement of the RFs and PFs and on transfer of the defense of bridges, cantonments, and other vital installations from the Marines to the RVN, RF, and PF. The Marines also tried to persuade the ARVN to take over a TAOR of their own, replacing one of the redeploying Marine regiments.

No increase in regular forces was scheduled in Quang Nam for 1970, but by June the JGS had authorized recruitment in the province of 16 additional PF platoons and four more RF companies. By the end of the year, most of these units had been raised and were completing their training. Besides organizing these new units, QDSZ and Quang Nam Province authorities throughout 1970 tried to enlarge the military capabilities of the RFs and PFs so that they could defend populated areas largely independently of support from the regular army. The ARVN then could replace the redeploying American units in offensive operations. Accordingly, the province instituted classes for RF and PF artillery forward observers and began training one of the Regional Force battalions, the 101st, in battalion-size operations so that it could act as a mobile reserve for the Quang Nam Regional and Popular Forces.

III MAF took a major part in this training effort. The CAPs and CUPPs provided continuous instruction, both formal and informal, for their counterpart PF platoons. Between January and June, 75 PF NCOs graduated from the 1st Marine Division's NCO school. The division conducted quick-fire marksmanship courses for RF and PF soldiers and trained others, as well as men from the 51st ARVN Regiment, in minesweeping and electric generator operation (important in bridge and cantonment security to maintain power to searchlights and other defense devices). The Marines also began instructing ARVN and RFs and PFs in reconnaissance operations and the use of sensors.[75]

Throughout the year, the 1st Marine Division continually pressed Quang Da Special Zone and Quang Nam Province to take full charge of the protection of bridges, cantonments, and other vital installations guarded wholly or partially by Marines. The division also tried to transfer to the Vietnamese responsibility for the daily minesweeping patrols designed to keep the major highways safe for traffic. These negotiations, largely conducted in the QDSZ/1st Marine Division/2d ROKMC Brigade weekly conferences, proved slow and frustrating. The Vietnamese repeatedly urged postponements of their assumption of responsibility, pleading lack of men, equipment, and training. They often forced delay in removal of Marines from defense positions, and they fell weeks behind the schedule to which they had agreed for taking over the minesweeps.[76]

Marine Corps Historical Collection

ARVN soldiers with their young mascot participate in an operation near Da Nang. The Vietnamese, however, are reluctant to take over the Marine areas.

The transfer of defensive tasks to the Vietnamese went forward inexorably nevertheless, kept in motion by the steady diminution of U.S. Marine manpower as regiments redeployed. In February, Quang Nam Province forces replaced elements of the 1st Marines guarding four bridges south of Da Nang. During March, elements of the 51st ARVN Regiment assumed formal responsibility for the security of Hills 37 and 55, although Marine units continued to operate from both. On 21 June, the 1/25 RF Group took over defense of the Esso oil depot on the coast north of Da

Nang, replacing a company of the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines. The Vietnamese assumed responsibility for the Cobb and Cau Do Bridges; major spans on the highways south of Da Nang, on 15 and 20 July, and on 1 August, the Regional Forces took full charge of the defense of Hai Van Pass. In September, RFs and PFs relieved elements of the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines at Nam O Bridge, where Highway 1 crosses the Cu De River north of Da Nang. After long negotiations and many delays, a battalion of the 51st ARVN occupied what was left of An Hoa combat base in mid-October while Quang Nam RFs and PFs assumed security of Liberty Bridge.[77]

The Marines had less success in persuading the ARVN to assume an independent TAOR in Quang Nam. As a result of the divided command of the ARVN units in the province, III MAF had to deal with I Corps on this issue. Lieutenant General McCutcheon repeatedly pressed Lieutenant General Lam, the I Corps commander, to establish an all ARVN TAOR. In response, the I Corps staff late in July proposed that the corps reserve units in Quang Nam, the 1st Ranger Group and the 1st Armored Brigade, assume the 7th Marines' TAOR when that regiment redeployed. The same ARVN units were to replace the Marines at FSBs Ross and Ryder and LZ Baldy. McCutcheon welcomed this suggestion as a "big step forward in the Vietnamization process" and expressed the hope that it would lead to the 51st ARVN taking over the 5th Marines' TAOR as that regiment withdrew. The Vietnamese, however, in the end backed away from this drastic expansion of their responsibility. They preferred to keep the 51st in its area of operations with the 5th Marines and to maintain the freedom of action of the Rangers and the armored brigade. Eventually, the 5th Marines had to take over the TAOR of the 7th while the 51st ARVN would accept only a portion of An Hoa and a small area around it.[78]

The year ended with encouraging indications of progress in Vietnamization, but with the process far from complete. From Lieutenant General McCutcheon on down, most Marines and other Americans who worked closely with the ARVN agreed that the units in Quang Nam—the 51st Regiment, the 1st Ranger Group, and the 1st Armored Brigade—"were aggressive and competent." MACV, in its nationwide rating of the effectiveness of Vietnamese units, placed the 51st Regiment third in the country in number of enemy killed per battalion and second in weapons captured per battalion. The rangers and armored troops, although rarely committed in Quang Nam, fought well when they were.

The Regional and Popular Forces continued to vary in quality from unit to unit, but overall appeared to be improving. Continuous emphasis on aiding the RFs and PFs by III MAF and to a lesser extent by I Corps and XXIV Corps at last seemed to be producing results. In Quang Nam, the Regional and Popular Forces had become more aggressive during the year. Now, they frequently left their fortified compounds at night to patrol and ambush. By December, according to the province senior advisor, they were conducting almost 300 activities every night and averaging four to five contacts.[79]

Nevertheless, crucial deficiencies remained, most of which were representative of problems plaguing the RVNAF throughout South Vietnam. Quang Da Special Zone, like other Vietnamese higher commands, still was short of competent high-ranking officers. This problem became critical in August, when the able QDSZ commander, Colonel Nguyen Van Thien, died in a plane crash while flying to Saigon to receive a long-overdue promotion to brigadier general. Vietnamese military politics and bureaucratic inefficiency kept Thien's post unfilled for weeks, leaving no officer in the province able to deal authoritatively with III MAF and the 1st Marine Division.[80]

The ARVN division- and corps-level staffs left much to be desired. General McCutcheon complained in August that they had "little appreciation for the time and space factors involved in an operation, nor of the logistic effort required to support one."[81] Shortages of specialized equipment and people trained to operate it prevented Vietnamese assumption of road minesweeping and other tasks now performed by Americans. Quang Da Special Zone possessed no supply organization of its own, and logistic support at corps level suffered from division of authority between Lieutenant General Lam and the various staffs in Saigon. Most serious, the ARVN throughout I Corps, indeed throughout the country, lacked sufficient fixed-wing and helicopter squadrons to furnish their own air support.* MACV planners expected this deficiency to persist, even with accelerated expansion of the Vietnamese Air Force, until mid-1972.

The Regional and Popular Forces also had persistent weaknesses. Particularly at district and company

*As of 1 January 1971, the RVNAF possessed only five operationally ready helicopter squadrons, four equipped with UH-1s and one with H-34s. MACV ComdHist70, III, ch. 7, p.13.

level, they still lacked enough first-rate leaders. Further, in spite of their increased aggressiveness, they had yet fully to grasp the American concept of maintaining continuous pressure on the enemy.[82] Their efforts too often were sporadic. Their aggressive forays were interspersed with long periods of relative quiescence. Major Grinalds said that RFs and PFs:

> . . . sometimes . . . like medieval forces, . . . stay in their compounds . . . for weeks at a time. Then suddenly their ramparts go up and they all go sallying forth on an operation and run out and get 15 VC on the basis of some good tip . . . . And then they go back into their fort and stay there for another six months.[83]

As 1970 ended, Vietnamization clearly was working, but it was working very slowly. With additional major Marine redeployments scheduled for early 1971, Americans and South Vietnamese alike were running out of time to finish the job.

Results, 1970

Throughout South Vietnam, pacification progress during 1970 failed to match the dramatic gains of the previous year. American advisors attributed this slowdown to South Vietnamese complacency over past successes, to diversion of GVN attention and resources to the operations in Cambodia, and to increased Viet Cong and North Vietnamese antipacification activities during spring and early summer.

To revive the lagging effort, President Thieu on 1 July promulgated a Special Pacification and Development Campaign to run until 31 October. He followed that with a Supplementary Pacification and Development Campaign, announced on 23 October, which was to begin on 1 November and continue through 28 February 1971. In theory, this fall and winter renewal of effort would establish momentum for the 1971 Pacification and Development Program, which would start on 1 March. The plans for these supplementary campaigns for the most part restated the goals of the 1970 Pacification and Development Plan, with emphasis on improving security and intensifying the attack on the VCI.[84]

By the end of the year, in spite of these plans and exhortations, the allies had fallen short of their goals on most of the Eight Objectives. Plans had called for bringing hamlets containing 100 percent of the population to at least the C level of security. According to the HES, 95.1 percent of the people lived in such hamlets in late 1970, while 84.6 percent, as opposed to the objective of 90 percent, enjoyed A- or B-level security. The allies had exceeded their goal of VCI neutralized (22,341 vs 21,600), but efforts to expand the national police had failed, leaving the force still 30,000 men under its planned strength. The arming and training of the PSDF combat force had gone according to schedule, but formation of the support force had lagged. Development of local government had gone well; as planned, about 3,000 villages and 14,000 hamlets had elected or reelected their officials. The *Chieu Hoi* program, on the other hand, had fallen 8,000 short of its target of 40,000 Communist defectors. Over 139,000 refugees, 70,000 fewer than planned, had received resettlement payments, and 388,000, which was 15,000 more than the goal, had received return-to-village assistance; but most of these in fact remained refugees and would require additional aid. Social and economic progress, as always, was slow. Only 50,900 hectares of land had been redistributed under the Land-to-the-Tiller Law, as against a goal of 200,000, and rice cultivation and expansion of rural banks had not met planned quotas.[85]

Pacification results in Quang Nam closely paralleled the national trends. With 68.2 percent of its population living in A- or B-rated hamlets, Quang Nam in December was one of the 10 lowest provinces in the nation in security.* On the positive side, it led all other provinces in VCI eliminated during the year, with 2,437 (III MAF figure) or 2,675 (the CORDS figure) dead, sentenced, or defected. This accounted for about 40 percent of the estimated VCI members in the province at the beginning of the year, but the enemy were believed to have replaced some of these losses by recruiting. How many of these enemy casualties could be credited to Phoenix/Phung Hoang remained questionable.[86] The conclusion of a MACV review committee on the nationwide anti-VCI program applied as well in Quang Nam:

> The reduction of overall VCI strength has been a result of the entire GVN and allied war effort. This had included the military success against the VC/NVA, the pacification program as a whole, the constitutional political structure and the economic revival in the countryside of Vietnam. Phoenix had to date contributed little to this reduction, although it has been an element of the overall program and during the past year had substantially increased its role against the VCI target.[87]

*Of the other provinces in I Corps, Quang Tri (93.5 percent) and Thua Thien (98.1 percent) were in the top 10 for security, while Quang Ngai was in the bottom 10 with 66.5 percent of its people in A or B hamlets. Quang Tin was in the middle group.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373322

Men of the 7th Marines in the Combined Unit Pacification Program escort a Vietnamese Chieu Hoi to their platoon command post in a village 22 miles south of Da Nang.

Elections for province, village, and hamlet governments during the year had produced real political contests for many posts and a large voter turnout, but fewer officials than planned had taken advantage of GVN training programs to improve their administrative skills. According to the province senior advisor, rapid turnover in the post of province training director, inadequate stipends for individuals travelling to the principal GVN training center at Vung Tau near Saigon, and the lack of either rewards for officials who took courses or demotions for those who did not had hindered instruction.[88]

During 1970, a total of 411 Viet Cong guerrillas, 45 North Vietnamese soldiers, and 600 nonmilitary Communist functionaries surrendered in Quang Nam under the Chieu Hoi program. This number represented a marked decline from the 2,000 defections reported in 1969. The reduced intensity of military contact during the year accounted for much of the drop, and, according to Colonel Hixson of the I Corps CORDS staff, "We're starting to get down to the hard core people now. . . . We've gotten all those that were easily swayed."[89]

The refugee situation showed little improvement during the year. In July, CORDS reported that 95,000 refugees in Quang Nam still had not received their basic benefit payments, and in September, the Ministry of Resettlement in Saigon, which had overspent its budget, cut off further funds to Quang Nam. In spite of the promising beginnings on Go Noi Island, actual return of refugees to their villages continued to be a slow, difficult process. Many areas still were not militarily secure enough for their people to return home, and some allied military forces, notably the Korean Marine brigade, actually discouraged refugees from resettling in their TAORs which complicated their defense problems. Even if security could be provided and they were permitted to go home, many of the people who had moved into the environs of Da Nang showed little desire to return to their original communities.[90]

In spite of these continuing frustrations, the allies in Quang Nam and throughout I Corps had made progress in pacification, but qualified observers disagreed on how much had been achieved. As early as May 1970, Lieutenant General Nickerson, recently returned from his tour in command of III MAF, told a briefing at HQMC:

> . . . [the Viet Cong] had lost the people war, as far as I'm concerned. People's war, the war of liberation, by definition and practice, is . . . where they can make a pass at a hamlet and the people inside in the infrastructure uprise and cause a change—boot out the good guys and take over with the bad guys. Well, in the north [of I Corps] that . . . infrastructure is mostly in the hills, in the two northern provinces. In the three southern, there's a little more present every day, but it has to be very careful when it surfaces because of the increase in territorials and confidence of the people that they're going to win. . . . In short I'm confident that we've . . . got 'em right where you want 'em . . . .[91]

Later in the year, Sir Robert Thompson, one of the architects of the successful British counterinsurgency campaign in Malaya, and long a critic of American conduct of the war in Vietnam, visited many parts of the country including Quang Nam. He concluded from what he observed that "it was quite clear that continued progress had been made in both the Pacification and Vietnamization programmes during the year, so that the 1969 gains were expanded and consolidated."[92]

Lieutenant General McCutcheon took a more cautious view, particularly on the question of whether the allies were winning the people's loyalty for the GVN. In a report to Lieutenant General Sutherland, he evaluated conditions in Quang Nam:

> Despite election turn-out and improved ratings in the Hamlet Evaluation System, we must accept the fact that a large portion of the Quang Nam people are apathetic toward the GVN. For that matter they would be equally apathetic toward any government, free or Communist. Their lives are simply devoted to existing. I doubt that many people, not directly involved in government or military business at a relatively high level, are aware of Vietnamization. Those who are aware of it almost certainly consider it a euphemism for U.S. withdrawal.[93]

After five years of large-scale American involvement in the war, by the end of 1970 the allies had put into effect a broad pacification strategy that appeared to be succeeding, but with painful slowness in difficult areas like Quang Nam. Security efforts had reduced Communist control of the villages and hamlets and with it the enemy's ability to draw support from the people. The South Vietnamese, at national, province, and local levels, had begun to establish a stable, elected non-Communist regime. Yet for the Marines and South Vietnamese in Quang Nam, as for allied forces all over the country, time was running out. Redeployments during 1970 had diminished American ability to assist in pacification as in other aspects of the war effort. These redeployments would continue and accelerate during 1971, and the South Vietnamese, ready or not, would soon have to assume a much larger share of both combat and pacification.

PART IV
WINDING UP AND WINDING DOWN

CHAPTER 10

Allied Strategic and Redeployment Plans for 1971

Military and Pacification Plans for 1971—Final Plans for Redeployment and the MAB
A New Commander for III MAF—Military Situation in Quang Nam and Military Region 1, Early 1971

Military and Pacification Plans for 1971

Late in 1970, as U.S. and South Vietnamese staffs prepared their plans for the following year, the Southeast Asian war gave evidence of simultaneous de-escalation and escalation. Within South Vietnam itself, the level of combat was declining as the allies concentrated on pacification, the Americans withdrew, and the Communists reverted to guerrilla warfare. On the other hand, the U.S. and ARVN sweep of the enemy's Cambodian bases, continuing ARVN operations and growing internal war in Cambodia, and increasingly heavy American air attacks on the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos pointed toward an expanded allied effort to wreck the Communists' cross-border bases, thereby reducing the enemy's ability to reintensify the war in South Vietnam.

The allied Combined Campaign Plan for 1971, promulgated on 31 October 1970 by the South Vietnamese, American, and allied commanders, reflected the changing trends of the war. Generally, the plan restated the allied strategy of the previous year, with increased emphasis on the RVNAF's assuming the tasks hitherto performed by the redeploying Americans, who would continue and accelerate their withdrawal. Under the plan, the ARVN and allied regular units were to operate primarily against main forces and base areas, and the ARVN in addition were to attack Communist forces in "authorized areas," i.e. Cambodia and Laos. The plan restated the established mission of the Regional and Popular Forces, People's Self Defense Force, and national police, assigning them to protect populated areas and support pacification.

Allied forces were to measure their progress during the year in terms of nine objectives: participation in the 1971 pacification campaign; improvement of the RVNAF "to achieve a maximum state of combat effectiveness"; employment of the RVNAF according to its assigned missions and capabilities; the infliction of "more losses on the enemy than he can replace"; denial to the enemy of the use of base areas and logistic systems within South Vietnam and adjacent countries; restoration and protection of roads and railways in South Vietnam; keeping food and other resources out of Communist hands; increasing intelligence and counterintelligence efforts; and neutralization of the Viet Cong Infrastructure "to the maximum extent possible."[1]

The XXIV Corps/MR 1 Combined Campaign Plan, promulgated on 29 December 1970, closely followed the national plan. It placed great emphasis on continuing U.S. redeployments and on improvement and modernization of the South Vietnamese forces so that they could "become self sufficient and capable of assuming the entire responsibility for the conduct of the war." The plan called for increased allied efforts to protect the people and control resources, "particularly at night"; continued training of ARVN, RFs, and PFs; and the provision of "responsive" support to province chiefs in their struggle to wipe out the VCI. Having experienced considerable success during 1970 in eliminating the VCI in Quang Nam, the plan called for the allies to intensify this effort while anticipating the enemy's increased attempts to reestablish his depleted military and political infrastructure at the hamlet and village level. The local plan also reiterated the assignment of missions to regulars, RFs, and PFs made in the national plan. In a variant on earlier plans, the XXIV Corps/MR 1 plan declared that the Regional Forces were to be employed under direction of the province chiefs in offensive operations against enemy provincial or local units. Only in the "most compelling cases" were RFs to be given static defense assignments. The 1971 plan also restated the Area Security Concept of the 1970 plan, under which each province was divided into heavily populated and relatively peaceful Secure Areas and Consolidation Zones controlled by the province chief, and more thinly populated and enemy-infested Clearing Zones and Border Surveillance Zones under ARVN or allied tactical unit commanders.[2]

The most significant new element in both national and regional military plans was a change in the definition of the role of U.S. units from conducting operations on their own to supporting and assisting South Vietnamese forces. This change was closely related to the Area Security Concept. On 1 January 1971, allied units ceased to have Tactical Areas of Responsibility

(TAORs). Instead, they received Tactical Areas of Interest (TAOIs), which normally encompassed about the same terrain as their old TAORs. Only ARVN commands now would have TAORs, and they would be responsible for assigning Areas of Operation (AOs) to allied units, usually in Clearing or Border Surveillance Zones.

This meant that in I Corps/MR 1, the TAOR commander became Lieutenant General Lam, while XXIV Corps had a TAOI which included all of the military region. Each subordinate command under XXIV Corps received a TAOI consisting of its former TAOR. III MAF's TAOI, for example, continued to be Quang Nam Province. Marine units would defend and patrol more or less where they had defended and patrolled before, but now within AOs granted by Quang Da Special Zone. This change involved more of an alteration of terminology and staff procedures than of day-to-day field operations, thus giving expression to the primacy of South Vietnamese responsibility for the conduct of the war. The change also forced ARVN headquarters to assume more of the burden of planning and directing operations.[3]

Soon after the issuance of the military plans, the South Vietnamese government, on 7 January 1971, issued its pacification and development plan for the new year. Breaking with past practice, the government called the document its "Community Defense and Local Development Plan" for 1971. This change of name was intended to dramatize the government's contention that, since most of the South Vietnamese people now lived under government control, "pacification" had been largely completed and the country now should emphasize development.

Instead of the Eight Objectives of the 1970 plan, the 1971 plan had only three: Self-Defense, Self-Government, and Self-Development. Each title, as in past plans, embraced a number of continuing programs. Self-Defense included efforts to improve village security, with the goal of having 95 percent of the people living in A or B hamlets by the end of the year. This goal also continued attempts to improve the national police and embraced the Chieu Hoi Program and the Phoenix/Phung Hoang effort, which in 1970 neutralized 2,437 VCI in Quang Nam, representing an estimated 40 percent of the enemy agents in the province. Self-Government covered training programs for local officials, encouragement of popular self-help organizations, and a campaign to instill in the South Vietnamese people an "increased awareness of the meaning of democracy." Under Self-Development were grouped such programs as land reform, aid to refugees and war victims, and activities to improve agriculture and fisheries and help villages develop their own economies, all aimed "at committing all the people to the effort of developing the economy and the society so that progress toward self-sufficiency could be obtained." MACV endorsed the new pacification plan, instructing subordinate U.S. commanders to give "full support" to its implementation.[4]

Final Plans for Redeployment and the MAB

During the last months of 1970, the staffs of III MAF and its subordinate commands continued to be preoccupied with planning for additional redeployments and for the organization and activation of the 3d Marine Amphibious Brigade. The two problems continued to be closely linked. Removal of all Marines from redeployment Increment V (Keystone Robin Bravo) had forced postponement of the activation of the MAB, initially scheduled for early fall. Instead, activation now was to occur after completion of Increment VI (Keystone Robin Charlie), which was to begin on 1 January 1971 and include the 12,400 Marines originally slated for Robin Bravo. III MAF now expected the MAB, which would consist of the Marines remaining after Robin Charlie, to begin operations in late April 1971.

Both the organization and the overall mission of the MAB had taken shape by autumn 1970, after almost a year of discussion, although there were still unresolved problems concerning exact composition. The brigade, with a total strength of about 12,600 Marines, was to have a ground component built around the 1st Marines and an air element consisting of an as yet undetermined mixture of aircraft types. III MAF planners were working on the assumption that the brigade, when activated, would have the general mission of protecting the Da Nang area. They were uncertain, however, how large the MAB TAOR* was to be. XXIV Corps had not yet stated definitely whether American or other allied units would be sent to Quang Nam to augment the dwindling Marine forces. The MAF and division staffs, accordingly, had to base their plans for MAB ground operations on the assumption that the brigade might have to defend the entire 1st Marine Division TAOR.[5]

*The change in terminology from TAOR to TAOI had not yet been made, and until January 1971, Americans continued to talk about TAORs.

In Washington during the autumn, the Marine Corps came under pressure in the Joint Chiefs of Staff to keep the 3d MAB in Vietnam longer than originally planned. The question of the length of the brigade's stay in the country arose in connection with plans for the Transitional Support Force (TSF), which would remain in Vietnam after most U.S. troops had withdrawn. This force was to provide combat and combat service support to the South Vietnamese until they achieved complete military self-sufficiency, or until the war ended, whichever happened first. The TSF would consist of about 255,000 U.S. Army, Navy, and Air Force personnel, including nine Army infantry brigades. As had happened during the planning for Keystone Robin Alpha, the Army reported to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in late October that shortages of men and money might prevent it from furnishing those nine brigades without reducing its forces elsewhere. The Joint Chiefs, in an effort to relieve the Army without reducing the TSF, then suggested to the Services, and to MACV and CinCPac, substitution of the 3d MAB for one of the Army brigades and its supporting units. This substitution, if made, could keep the Marine brigade in Vietnam until the end of Fiscal Year 1972, 30 June 1972, as much as a year beyond its intended departure date of 30 June 1971.

The proposal met strong objections from the Marine Corps, which pointed out that its budgets and manpower planning were based on continuing the previously established rate of redeployment. Keeping the MAB in Vietnam for an extra year would force reduction of other Marine Corps capabilities. Admiral John S. McCain, Jr., CinCPac, also objected. He stated that retention of the MAB in Vietnam would delay reestablishment of the projected Pacific reserve of two full Marine division-wing teams, one based in Okinawa, Japan, and Hawaii and the other in California.[6]

General Abrams passed the proposal on to Lieutenant General Sutherland, the XXIV Corps commander. On 9 November, Sutherland urged that the MAB not be included in the Transitional Support Force. While expressing his "complete confidence and professional admiration" for the Marines, he pointed out that communications and command problems would result from retaining a Marine Service component command that late in the redeployment process and that, if retained, the MAB would require additional Army logistic support. Sutherland also noted that a Marine brigade was larger by about 4,000 men than a typical Army brigade and included an air as well as a ground element. Keeping the MAB would force additional reductions in the other Service components to compensate for the Marine aviation personnel.[7] In spite of all these objections, the possibility of adding the MAB to the TSF remained open until the last days of 1970, because MACV and CinCPac, while reluctant to have the Marine brigade, would accept it rather than reduce the total strength of the transitional force.[8]

With the issue of retaining the MAB and the question of the size of the MAB TAOR still unresolved, General Abrams on 3 November directed III MAF, with the other U.S. Service commands, to submit its list of units to be withdrawn in Increment VI. Of the 60,000 Americans to be withdrawn in this increment, III MAF, as planned earlier, was to furnish 12,400, one regimental landing team with aviation and support units.[9]

The MACV request for a definitive troop list for Increment VI forced III MAF to make an immediate and final decision on the composition of the 3d MAB, since by process of elimination the redeployment troop list would consist of the units not wanted in the brigade. Accordingly, on 5 November, Lieutenant General McCutcheon held a conference of commanders and staff officers of the wing, division, and Force Logistic Command. He informed the assembled officers that, with the MACV demand for a troop list in hand, "the time had come for a decision on the structure of the MAB." By this time, the III MAF staff had developed seven different possible organizations for the MAB. Most of these included varying reductions of the fixed-wing aviation element, to allow retention of all or a portion of a fourth infantry battalion. Two of the alternatives called for an increase in total MAB strength to 13,600 to make room for both a fixed-wing air group and the additional infantry.[10]

At the 5 November conference, McCutcheon announced his selection of Alternative Six. As originally drafted, this plan increased the brigade to 13,600 men to permit retention of two jet squadrons and the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines. McCutcheon, however, decided to eliminate the jet squadrons and their air group, MAG-11, leaving a MAB of 12,600 with four full infantry battalions, a military police battalion, and a strong helicopter group, but no fixed-wing aviation except a detachment of OV-10s. The III MAF commander explained that he expected the operating life of the MAB to be short and believed, as he had since

late July, that the brigade would need extra infantry to defend Da Nang more than it would need the jet squadrons and their controlling MAG. Many of the missions flown by the jets, he pointed out, would be in support of non-Marine forces, and the administrative and support units required by the squadrons would absorb too much of the brigade's authorized manpower.

Major General Armstrong, the 1st MAW commander, and Major General Widdecke, the 1st Division commander, both concurred in McCutcheon's decision to eliminate the fixed-wing air units. Armstrong said that "MAG-11 [fixed wing] would be a real problem to redeploy concurrently with MAG-16 [helicopters] in a 60-day period [the expected length of time the MAB would be operating]." General Widdecke observed that McCutcheon's proposed organization would be sufficient for 60 days, but thought that if the brigade remained in Vietnam longer than that, it should have its own fixed-wing support. Both Widdecke and his assistant division commander, Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, also expressed concern for the "political" and doctrinal implications of forming a MAB that was not a fully balanced air-ground command.[11]

McCutcheon transmitted his proposed MAB organization to Lieutenant General Jones, commander of FMFPac, on the 5th, with a Keystone Robin Charlie troop list derived from it. The list included only two battalions of the 5th Marines, but all the remaining jet squadrons, with the headquarters and support units of MAG-11. McCutcheon repeated to Jones his belief in keeping the MAB strong in infantry while getting rid of aircraft that would impose a heavy logistic and administrative burden and, given the expected mission of the brigade, were not likely to be required for support. McCutcheon stated that artillery and helicopter gunships could provide adequate firepower for most probable contingencies and that in the unlikely event fixed-wing assistance were needed, the U.S. Air Force could furnish it.[12]

On 7 November, Lieutenant General Jones sent McCutcheon's proposal on to HQMC. Jones endorsed the III MAF commander's plan to eliminate the fixed-wing component of the MAB, with the qualification that if the brigade were included in the Transitional Support Force it would need its own jets. The Commandant, General Chapman, rejected the III MAF plan. Chapman informed FMFPac that the MAB should be organized so that it could remain operational for a long period, since the Joint Chiefs of Staff still were considering inclusion of the MAB in the TSF. Also, Chapman pointed out, combat could intensify between the first of the year and the departure of the last Marines. Hence, the Commandant ordered that at least two jet squadrons be included in the MAB, so that it would constitute a complete air-ground team prepared for all contingencies.

Accordingly, McCutcheon then adopted another of the alternative brigade organizations developed by his staff. Under this plan, the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines was dropped from the MAB, and MAG-11, with one squadron of A-4s and one of A-6s, put back in. On 8 November, McCutcheon sent MACV his troop list for Increment VI, reflecting this revision of his plan for the MAB. The list included all of the 5th Marines; the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines; four helicopter squadrons; one jet squadron; and a proportional assortment of supporting units. The major air and ground units were to begin standing down from combat in mid-February.[13]

While the composition of the MAB was being determined, the 1st Marine Division staff, under the direction of General Simmons, was completing a proposed concept of operations for the brigade. General Simmons, a combat veteran of World War II and Korea, had been G-3 of III MAF and then commander of the 9th Marines during 1965 and 1966. After a tour at Headquarters as Deputy Fiscal Director of the Marine Corps, he returned to Vietnam in July 1970, with the dual role of assistant division commander and commander-designate of the 3d MAB. For MAB planning, Simmons acted as an advisor to General McCutcheon on overall brigade matters and also advised General Widdecke on 1st Marine Division plans for the ground element of the MAB.[14]

On 11 November, Simmons submitted his proposed plan to General Widdecke. The concept of operations was based on the assumption that the brigade would have to defend the entire 1st Marine Division TAOR and that a decision would not be made "until the eleventh hour" on whether the MAB would be included in the TSF. The division planners also assumed that no major new ARVN or allied units would be sent to Quang Nam to replace the Marines.

Under the proposed concept of operations, the brigade was to keep one infantry battalion in the Que Sons, probably based at Baldy. Of the remaining two battalions of the 1st Marines, one would operate west of Da Nang and the other south of the city and air-

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A800156
LtGen Donn J. Robertson visits Combined Action Marines. Gen Robertson relieved the ailing LtGen Keith B. McCutheon as Commanding General, III MAF.

field. In order to cover the area with fewer Marines, the battalions would have to operate in what the plan called "a highly mobile expeditionary mode." Ideally, each battalion would have only one permanent base to be defended and would keep two of its companies continually in the field while a third acted as a helicopter-borne quick reaction force and the fourth, resting after a period in the field, would protect the battalion base. The battalions would use tactics similar to those already being employed by the 5th Marines, combining reconnaissance and infantry patrols with heliborne QRFs, artillery, and air strikes. In the Rocket Belt, increased reconnaissance activity and use of aerial observers would have to replace much of the saturation infantry patrolling done by Marines, but in view of the apparent weakness of the enemy and of the improvement of the Regional and Popular Forces, the division planners considered this an acceptable risk. The whole plan was designed:

> . . . to optimize the performance of the ground element of the MAB in the event of an extended stay and continued responsibility for the present area of operations, in other words, the extreme case. However, the concept is adaptable to a smaller AO and will, by lightening the logistic load, expedite the early departure of the brigade if such eventuates.[15]

The success of the operating concept for the MAB would be greatly influenced by the ability of the South Vietnamese to compensate for reduced Marine presence and patrolling with intensified operations of their own. During 1970 the CAPs had focused on training their Vietnamese counterparts to operate independently and aggressively.[16]

Major General Widdecke approved the plan and on 14 November passed it on to Lieutenant General McCutcheon. McCutcheon delayed his response while he tried to obtain from XXIV Corps a firm statement of the Army's intentions on reinforcing Quang Nam. By late November, he had received definite information from XXIV Corps that the MAB would be relieved of responsibility for the 5th Marines' area of operation when that regiment redeployed and that another American or allied force would move into the Que Sons. With this assurance finally in hand, McCutcheon, on 28 November, approved the division's proposed MAB concept of operation. He directed, however, that "planning should be based on [the] assumption [that the] MAB AO will be the current 1st Mar[ine] Div[ision] AO, less 5th Mar[ines] AO . . . . [17]

Late in December, the Joint Chiefs of Staff removed the second uncertainty clouding plans for the MAB by deciding that it would not require the brigade for the Transitional Support Force. This permitted the Marines to plan on redeploying the brigade by 30 June 1971. By the end of the year, the MAF, division, and wing staffs were well into the complicated process of working out stand-down and redeployment schedules for both Increment VI and Increment VII. They also were establishing detailed procedures for activating the MAB headquarters by transferring key members of the MAF, division, and wing staffs.[18]

The decision to have the last Marines out of Vietnam by the end of June 1971 meant that the 3d MAB really would never function as an operational command. Its principal task would be redeploying its subordinate units, some of which were scheduled to stand down almost as soon as the MAB was activated. This fact, and the administrative problems likely to attend the last phase of redeployment, raised a question in the mind of Major General Armstrong, the 1st MAW commander, about the desirability of establishing a MAB at all.

On 15 December, Armstrong, in temporary command of III MAF after McCutcheon's unexpected early departure for health reasons, sent a message to Lieutenant General Jones. Armstrong pointed out to the commander of FMFPac that if the MAB were to leave Vietnam by 30 June, "Increment Seven stand-down will, in fact, merge with and overlap Increment Six, with two air groups to be redeployed in the final increment, aviation problems would predominate during the MAB's short lifespan." Armstrong declared that solution of many of these problems would require dealings with the Seventh Air Force, which had partial control of Marine fixed-wing squadrons under the single-management system. He also questioned whether a brigade headquarters under a one-star general could effectively represent Marine interests in these circumstances. He suggested, therefore, that instead of the MAB, a reduced III MAF Headquarters under a major general, or preferably a lieutenant general, remain until 30 June.

Lieutenant General Jones adopted Armstrong's proposal. Jones suggested on 22 December that a small III MAF (Rear) stay in Vietnam instead of the brigade, with a major general in command. By the end of the year, III MAF had developed a table of organization for such a headquarters, to be staffed by 112 Marine and 6 Navy officers and 195 Marine and 5 Navy enlisted men.[19]

In mid-January 1971, General Chapman brought this planning to an abrupt end. On a visit to the Pacific which included stops at FMFPac and III MAF, the Commandant directed that the original program be adhered to and that 3d MAB be activated after the MAF, wing, and division redeployed. With Chapman's decision, the much-planned and often-postponed brigade was at last assured at least a short period of existence.[20]

A New Commander for III MAF

In late October 1970, General Chapman announced plans to replace Lieutenant General McCutcheon as commander of III MAF with Major General Donn J. Robertson, then serving at Headquarters as Director of the Marine Corps Reserve. The change of command was to take place around 1 January 1971, after the Senate had confirmed Robertson's promotion to lieutenat general. In mid-November, General McCutcheon, after consultation with MACV, XXIV Corps, and FMFPac, set 2 January as the date for the transfer, after which McCutcheon would leave immediately for Washington. There, he was to be promoted to general and succeed General Lewis W. Walt as Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps.[21]

McCutcheon's failing health disrupted these plans and forced an earlier change of command. Before coming out to III MAF the year before, McCutcheon had undergone extensive surgery for cancer. Seemingly recovered, he had been able to assume command in Vietnam and carry out his duties. But, as McCutcheon's predecessor at III MAF, Lieutenant General Nickerson, later put it, "Sooner or later it wasn't all gone and it got him."[22]

During November, McCutcheon came down with a persistent mild fever. "It doesn't amount to a whale of a lot," he wrote to a friend, "but it keeps me pretty well locked up in the quarters and prevents me from getting around the countryside, which is really what I love to do." McCutcheon finally went on board the hospital ship USS *Sanctuary* (AH 17) for tests. The results indicated that his cancer might be flaring up again. On 11 December, after returning from the *Sanctuary*, McCutcheon called together his general officers and told them that, on the doctors' recommendation, he would be leaving on the 13th for Washington to enter Bethesda Naval Hospital for additional tests. General Simmons recalled the departure:

> His plane left at 0755 on Sunday the 13th. It was a fine bright morning with a fresh breeze blowing. General McCutcheon had asked that there be no departure ceremony, but there was no preventing a spontaneous, sincere send-off. Always slight, he looked gaunt and tired as he shook hands and said goodbye.*[23]

After General McCutcheon's departure, Major General Alan J. Armstrong, commander of the 1st MAW, took over temporarily as acting commander of III MAF. Lieutenant General Robertson, following hasty Senate confirmation of his new rank, hurried his move to Vietnam and reached Da Nang on 23 December. He took command on the 24th. Robertson, a North Dakotan who had earned the Navy Cross on Iwo Jima, was already familiar with the III MAF TAOR, having commanded the 1st Marine Division in the same area from June 1967 through June 1968. This experience, combined with a close acquaintanceship with General Abrams, which had developed during his earlier Vietnam tour, allowed Robertson to take

*The new tests indicated that the cancer had revived. Too ill to assume his post as Assistant Commandant, McCutcheon was placed on the retired list on 1 July 1971 with the rank of general. He died of cancer on 13 July 1971.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373799

Troops from the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines wait for helicopters to take them from their old base in the Que Son Mountains to Hill 34 near Da Nang; as the battalion began standing down for redeployment. Part of the old defenses can be seen in the background.

charge easily in spite of his rushed assumption of command.[24]

Military Situation in Quang Nam and Military Region 1, Early 1971

Lieutenant General Robertson assumed command of a force less than half the size of the III MAF McCutcheon had taken over 10 months earlier. III MAF, which had contained almost 60,000 men in early 1970, in January 1971 included about 24,700 Marines and about 1,000 Navy personnel. Major General Widdecke's 1st Marine Division had only two of its infantry regiments, the 1st and 5th Marines, and roughly two-thirds of its artillery regiment, the 11th Marines, about 12,000 troops in all, with which to protect Da Nang and scour the Que Son Mountains. The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, under Major General Armstrong, consisted of one fixed-wing group, Colonel Albert C. Pommerenk's MAG-11, based at Da Nang, and one helicopter group, MAG-16 under Colonel Lewis C. Street III, operating from Marble Mountain. The 6,100 Marines of the wing flew and maintained a total of 74 fixed-wing aircraft and 111 helicopters. Force Logistic Command, under Brigadier General James R. Jones, had shrunk to some 3,800 officers and men, most of them engaged in preparing for the redeployment of additional troops and equipment. Lieutenant Colonel John J. Tolnay's 2d Combined Action Group, with about 600 Marines, continued its hamlet defense activities throughout much of Quang Nam, operating with 34 combined action platoons in January and February.[25]

As their numbers decreased, the Marines were turning more and more of the responsibility for defending Quang Nam over to the province's South Vietnamese RFs and PFs. On 1 January 1971, the Viet-

namese Joint General Staff redesignated Quang Da Special Zone, the controlling ARVN headquarters in Quang Nam, as the 1st Mobile Brigade Task Force and gave the task force operational control of the 51st Infantry Regiment, the three-battalion 1st Ranger Group, a squadron from the 1st Armored Brigade, and the 78th and 79th Border Ranger Defense Battalions. The latter were the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups at Nong Son and Thuong Duc, redesignated and incorporated into the regular army. The 1st Task Force also received a new commander, Colonel Nguyen Trong Luat, former assistant division commander of the 2d ARVN Division.* This redesignation of QDSZ represented another step in the effort, long sponsored and aided by III MAF, to develop an effective tactical headquarters for all the ARVN troops in Quang Nam. As 1971 began, the 51st Regiment, the principal ground unit of the 1st Task Force, had its battalions in the field around An Hoa and Hills 37 and 55. The Rangers and the armored squadron, still regarded as part of the I Corps reserve, continued to spend most of their time in camp around Da Nang.[26]

Like Quang Da Special Zone, the 1st Task Force had operational control of the RFs and PFs in Quang Nam, control which it exercised through the province and Da Nang city authorities. The Regional Forces in early 1971 numbered about 7,800 effectives in 54 operational companies, and the Popular Forces about 6,400 men in 202 separate platoons. This was about the maximum militia strength which the province could maintain. Hence, the South Vietnamese authorities planned no additional units for the coming year. They would concentrate instead on bringing the existing ones to full strength.** The RFs and PFs were now acquiring their own artillery, under a nationwide program begun during 1970. By 6 January 1971, three RF platoons of 105mm howitzers, with their own sector headquarters and fire direction center, had deployed in Quang Nam. The province PSDF continued to display much promise and some real strength, with about 13,500 armed members in the field at the beginning of the year. To improve the training of the militia and for better coordination of village defense, Quang Nam Province and the 1st Task Force were planning to subdivide each district into several areas of operation, each under a RF company commander. The company commander would be responsible for training the PFs and PSDF within his AO and would have operational control of them "on a mission required basis."[27]

Lieutenant General Robertson, as he took over his new command, found Quang Nam seemingly much more peaceful and secure than it had been during his earlier tour with the 1st Marine Division. He observed:

> I really was going right back home. I was going back to the same area that I was familiar with . . . . I recognized progress in the war, favorable progress . . . . Not as many enemy forces around. They really had pulled away from that area considerably. More work being done in the fields . . . . It just seemed to me to be a feeling of more security in the hamlets and villages around that area . . . . Security wise the people were cooperating . . . .[28]

While the relative quiescence of the enemy in Quang Nam was a fact, Marines differed in their assessments of what it meant. The more optimistic observers argued that the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong, short of men and supplies, and suffering from declining discipline and morale, simply were not capable of much beyond occasional terrorism and hit-and-run attacks. Some Marines also assumed another cause of declining activity was the flood in October-November which temporarily disrupted VC/NVA command and control networks and lines of communication, much as it had done with the allies in Quang Nam. Others, including Major John S. Grinalds, S-2 of the 1st Marines, felt that the Communists were following a calculated strategy. Grinalds believed that the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese wanted the U.S. withdrawal to proceed on schedule. The enemy would engage in enough military activity, for example firing rockets at Da Nang, to keep both Vietnamese civilians and the American public aware that the war was still going on; but they would not make attacks of sufficient strength to constitute a serious threat to allied forces and justify slowing down the removal of American troops. Grinalds expected the enemy to bide their time, building up their supply stockpiles, and recruit

*Colonel Nguyen Van Thien, who had done much to build QDSZ into an effective tactical headquarters, had been killed in a plane crash in August 1970, and was finally replaced by Colonel Phan Hoa Hiep. On 1 January 1971, Hiep went to Saigon to command the Armor Corps and Luat succeeded him as commander, 1st Task Force.

**The actual strength of the RFs and PFs in the field often was much below their authorized strength. In Quang Nam in March 1971, for instance, these were the authorized and actual numbers:

	Authorized	Present for Duty
RF	8,644	7,820
PF	7,070	6,417

—CG XXIV Corps msg to PSAs of Quang Nam and Quang Ngai, dtd 4May71, Box 25, Fldr 26, RG 319 (72A6443), FRC, Suitland, Md.

more guerrillas and VCI members, while they weakened civilian confidence in the South Vietnamese Government by continued terrorism and propaganda. Then, as Grinalds put it, "in July, when we finally stepped out, they could come in with their main force units and either act politically or militarily to . . . control the area."[29]

The enemy throughout I Corps appeared to be committed to low-intensity warfare through terrorism and small hit-and-run attacks. Early in 1971, Lieutenant General Sutherland, the XXIV Corps commander, described the situation for the new commanding general of the 101st Airborne Division:

> There has been a marked change in the enemy's strategy and tactics during the past year. Logistical problems and allied firepower, among other things, have made maneuvering of large enemy troop units impractical, if not impossible, and have caused emphasis to be shifted in the main to small unit and guerrilla tactics. Enemy units generally seek to avoid contact, . . . until they perceive a condition wherein a FWMAF [Free World Military Armed Forces] unit or installation becomes careless and vulnerable. Then they strike quickly and fade away again. Rarely will an enemy unit stand and fight, even against a small opposing force . . . [30]

As always, the Demilitarized Zone seemed to allied commanders to be the one area where the enemy could most easily shift suddenly from guerrilla tactics to large-unit warfare. As 1971 began, reports from a variety of intelligence sources indicated that the North Vietnamese might be planning to do just that. The enemy was moving more troops, weapons, and supplies into their Laotian base areas north and west of the DMZ, in easy reach of Quang Tri and Thua Thien, the two vulnerable northern provinces of MR 1. In response to these indications of a possible enemy offensive, by the start of the new year, MACV and XXIV Corps had begun planning a preemptive attack on the Laotian base areas. These plans, about which III MAF as yet knew nothing, were to culminate in one of the largest, most controversial allied offensives of the war.[31]

CHAPTER 11

Marines in Operation Lam Son 719

The Preemptive Strike: Lam Son 719—Marine Fixed Wing Air Support and the ASRT
Marine Helicopters Over Laos—Marine Trucks on Route 9—Diversion Off Vinh—Results of Lam Son 719

The Preemptive Strike: Lam Son 719

During late 1970, the evidence that the North Vietnamese were preparing for a major offensive in northern Military Region 1 became increasingly persuasive. U.S. aerial reconnaissance recorded a growing movement of men and vehicles down the Ho Chi Minh Trail network into the Laotian base areas north and west of the Demilitarized Zone. Pilots flying bombing missions over the trail encountered reinforced antiaircraft defenses. Reports from agents and prisoner interrogations contained frequent mention of a large-scale attack sometime between the beginning of the new year and the middle of the summer.[1]

These signs of a coming Communist offensive spurred MACV to revive plans made earlier in the war for an attack into Laos from northwest Quang Tri Province. Beginning in 1966, General William C. Westmoreland, then ComUSMACV, had had his staff develop a series of plans for an American and ARVN offensive, possibly in cooperation with Laotian or Thai forces, to block the Ho Chi Minh Trail where it skirted the western end of the DMZ. In spite of repeated requests Westmoreland never received permission to carry out these plans.[2]

Late in 1970, General Abrams, Westmoreland's former deputy and successor, proposed a raid into Laos, both to forestall the threatened North Vietnamese offensive and to disrupt the enemy's supply system while more U.S. troops redeployed. Precedent for cross-border operations had been set with the incursion into Cambodia and, early in January 1971, Washington agreed to a limited preemptive strike. On 7 January, under direction from MACV, small planning groups from I Corps and XXIV Corps, working in tight secrecy, began developing a detailed concept of operations. General Abrams approved this plan on 16 January.[3]

Following General Abram's approval, planning for the operation proceeded with continued secrecy. Colonel Verle E. Ludwig, whose boss at the time was Army Colonel Bob Leonard, the MACV Information Officer, recalled that Leonard sold Abrams on the idea that the "story should be embargoed for the press." To serve as another layer of deception as the planning continued, "the MACV staff (and others) devised code names for places in Laos, to make it appear that the operation was only going into the Khe Sanh and A Shau Valley areas." Ludwig himself was "never cut in on the fact that the operation actually was going over into Laos" despite his having to give "a daily briefing to the press at the press billet in downtown Saigon . . . ."[4]

The plan called for a four-phase operation, codenamed Lam Son 719. I Corps was to direct most of the ground campaign while XXIV Corps commanded all the U.S. forces involved and controlled the fixed-wing and helicopter air support on which the whole offensive would depend. In Phase One, to begin on 30 January and be completed by 7 February, elements of the American 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) and the 101st Airborne Division were to reopen and secure Route 9, the main east-west road through Quang Tri, from its junction with Route 1 at Dong Ha, west to the Laotian border. The XXIV Corps units would occupy the site of the former Marine base at Khe Sanh, unoccupied since 1968, as the forward supply base for the offensive.

In Phase Two, from 7 February to 6 March, elements of the 1st ARVN Division and 1st Armored Brigade, reinforced from the national strategic reserve by the 1st Airborne Division and the newly formed Vietnamese Marine Division, would move through the American units into Laos. The ARVN units were to drive westward to Tchepone, a major Ho Chi Minh Trail junction 30 miles inside Laos, destroying enemy troops and supply dumps as they advanced. The armored brigade would proceed along Route 9, while the airborne division and the 1st Division, by heliborne assaults, were to establish a series of fire bases on high ground to protect the road. In this and the later phases of the operation, the Americans would furnish air, artillery, and logistic support. In accord with general restrictions imposed by the U.S. Congress, however, no American advisors or other personnel were to accompany Vietnamese ground units into Laos, although Americans could fly support and rescue missions across the border. Additionally, American Marine advisors with the Vietnamese Marine Corps, who

were trained aerial observers, were on board command and control Hueys during daylight hours.

During Phase Three, which was to last from 7 to 9 March, the ARVN troops would sweep their areas of operation, thoroughly wrecking the trail system and supply caches. Then, in Phase Four, they were to withdraw eastward into South Vietnam, either directly down Route 9 or southeastward through the enemy's base areas in the Da Krong and A Shau Valleys. The choice of withdrawal route would depend on circumstances at that time. Whichever route was chosen, the operation would end on or about 6 April.

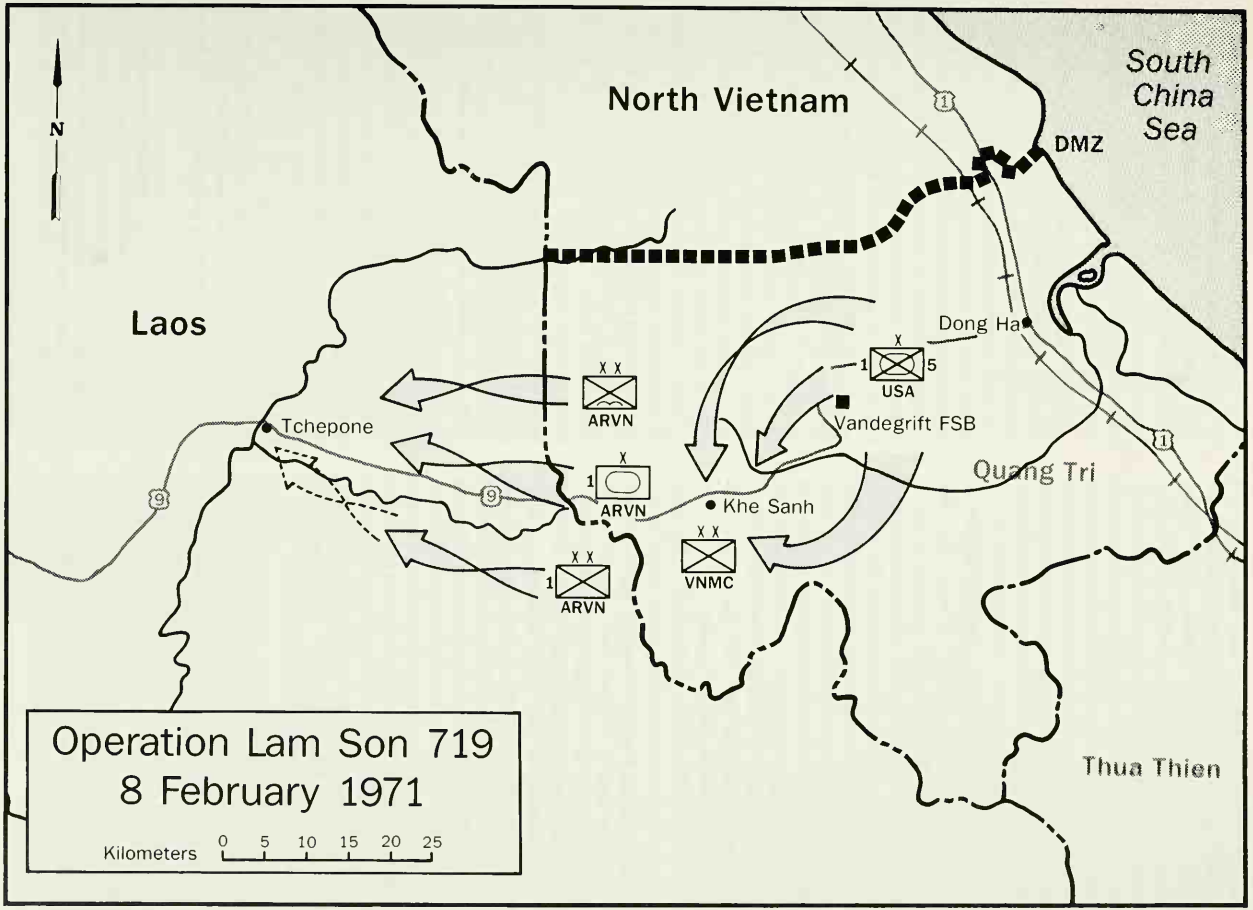
III MAF took no part in the planning for Lam Son 719 and received no information about it until a few days before D-Day. Between 25 and 30 January, Lieutenant General Sutherland personally briefed Lieutenant General Robertson on the impending offensive and outlined III MAF's part in it. Remembering the meeting years later, Robertson said that Sutherland "apologized for not briefing me during the early planning phase, but was not to tell anyone, other than his key staff officers, about the operation."[5] Sutherland directed Robertson to furnish Marine air support, both fixed-wing and helicopter, and to increase Marine patrols along Route 1 in Quang Nam, particularly where the highway, important for supply of the operation, crossed Hai Van Pass. Later, on 6 February, as transport difficulties hindered the offensive, Sutherland requested and received a reinforced Marine truck company to help move supplies from Dong Ha to the logistic support areas at FSB Vandegrift and at Khe Sanh.[6]

Phase One of Lam Son 719 began on schedule.[7] On 29 January, Lieutenant General Lam established his I Corps forward command post at Dong Ha and General Sutherland set up XXIV Corps Forward Headquarters at Quang Tri. The following day, in what the Americans called Operation Dewey Canyon II, elements of the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) advanced from FSB Vandegrift along Route 9 toward Khe Sanh and the Laotian border. The U.S. troops met only light, scattered resistance. Behind the combat units, U.S. Army engineers rebuilt bridges and culverts on Route 9 and prepared the long unused highway for truck traffic. Artillery and support units moved into Khe Sanh and began reestablishing an airstrip capable of receiving Air Force C-130 transports. The ARVN 1st Armored Brigade, 1st Airborne Division, and 1st Infantry Division moved up under cover of the American advance and concentrated around Khe Sanh for the move into Laos while U.S. helicopters and trucks brought in fuel, ammunition, and supplies.

Although the objectives of the operation in Laos were concealed for as long as possible, leaks of information did occur. South Vietnamese Major General

Aerial view of Route 9 near Khe Sanh. This narrow road meandered through the difficult mountain passages and provided excellent cover and concealment for enemy ambushes. Throughout the 1968 siege aerial resupply was the only means of reprovision.

Courtesy of Capt Chalmers R. Hood, Jr., USMC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North Vietnam
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ARVN
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Vandegrift FSB
Quang Tri
Khe Sanh
VNMC
Thua Thien
Operation Lam Son 719
8 February 1971
Kilometers
0 5 10 15 20 25

Nguyen Duy Hinh said that press speculation was aroused when, during the preparatory period of the operation, reporters were not allowed into the Quang Tri area. He became convinced that press leaks eliminated the possible advantages of surprise. Looking back on the operation, Marine Major John G. Miller, an advisor with the Vietnamese Marines during Lam Son 719, related "Late in the operation we learned that there had been a direct leak out of [General] Lam's CP across the DMZ. An ARVN captain and his wife were caught passing plans . . . to the NVA."[8]

On 8 February, the ARVN 1st Armored Brigade advanced into Laos along Route 9 to begin Phase Two of the offensive. U.S. helicopters deployed six battalions of the 1st Airborne and 1st Infantry Divisions to set up firebases flanking the highway. The infantry went in south of Route 9 and the airborne, reinforced by a ranger group, took positions north of the road. Two more battalions landed by helicopter further west to link up with the advancing tanks. Meanwhile, the XXIV Corps units around Khe Sanh continued to build up their logistic base while patrolling to protect Route 9 within South Vietnam.

During their first few days in Laos, the South Vietnamese troops encountered only small groups of enemy as they pushed westward toward Tchepone. North Vietnamese reaction, however, soon strengthened. By 18 February, the South Vietnamese were in contact with NVA in company and battalion strength. Heavy fighting erupted as determined North Vietnamese, supported by mortars, artillery, and tanks, assaulted the firebases protecting the flanks of the advance. On the 19th, 400-500 North Vietnamese overran the 39th Ranger Battalion north of the highway, inflicting losses of 178 men killed or missing and 148 wounded. A week later, tank-led NVA troops stormed FSB Delta, an airborne position. Other South Vietnamese firebases held out, aided by U.S. helicopter gunships, jets, and B-52s. The American positions at Khe Sanh came under sporadic mortar and rocket attack.

The North Vietnamese, for once departing from their usual evasive tactics, had decided to defy U.S. and ARVN firepower and stand and fight for their vital supply line. Reinforcing more rapidly than allied planners had anticipated, the enemy committed elements of five divisions, including an estimated 12 infantry regiments, two artillery regiments, and at least one armored regiment during the battle along Route 9. The NVA used aggressive, well conceived tactics against the ARVN firebases. Their infantry moved in close to the defenders to prevent the use of American air support. From concealed positions, NVA mortars and artillery kept up steady bombardment, and at some places tanks fired point blank into ARVN positions. Machine gun and mortar fire met each helicopter attempting to bring in reinforcements and supplies or to evacuate wounded.*

Under increasing pressure, the South Vietnamese frontline troops, with some exceptions, defended their positions tenaciously. Their artillery, supplemented by U.S. artillery and air support, including dozens of B-52 strikes, inflicted severe losses on the North Vietnamese. In spite of pressure on their flanks, the South Vietnamese continued to push westward, both on the ground and by helicopter. South of Route 9, battalions of the Vietnamese Marine Division took over a portion of the 1st ARVN Infantry Division's sector, allowing elements of the latter unit to make a brief token occupation of Tchepone. By 6 March, the planned end of Phase Two, the South Vietnamese had temporarily blocked the main supply routes of the Ho Chi Minh Trail and had captured or destroyed large caches of arms, ammunition, and supplies.

While Operation Lam Son 719 had moved forward on schedule in the face of heavy opposition, the test of conducting a large-scale, contested invasion revealed a number of ARVN deficiencies. The 1st Armored Brigade had made a disappointing showing. It had failed to advance as speedily as planned, partly as a result of the poor condition of Route 9 in Laos and partly because of hesitant leadership. Several times, the armored brigade ignored requests for support from other hard-pressed South Vietnamese units. The I Corps and division commanders and staffs, inexperienced in directing an operation of this size and complexity, gradually lost control of the developing battle. For Vietnamese Marine units, control deteriorated at night when American Marine advisors were not airborne in command and control Hueys supporting their Vietnamese counterparts in Laos. Compounding command and control problems, the Airborne and Marine division commanders, who were only under General Lam's authority for Lam Son 719, were accused of frequently disregarding orders from

*Lieutenant Colonel Marshall N. Carter, an advisor with the Vietnamese Marine Corps at the time, recalled that in addition to heavy mortar and machine gun fire, "there was an abundance of sophisticated antiaircraft weapons – some apparently radar-directed." LtCol Marshall N. Carter, Comments on draft ms, 28Mar83 (Vietnam Comment File).

I Corps.* Inevitably, coordination of U.S. air and artillery support for South Vietnamese units proved difficult, especially since there were no American advisory or liaison personnel with the ARVN in Laos.[9]

Even with these developing problems, the allies decided to extend Phase Three from the planned two days to more than a week. From 7 to 16 March, the South Vietnamese battalions swept their operating areas north and south of Route 9 with the intention of capturing or destroying as much enemy material as possible. North Vietnamese resistance slackened temporarily; on the 14th, however, after two days of bad weather had limited allied air operations, the NVA renewed artillery and ground attacks on several key firebases, while at the same time increasing harassment of Khe Sanh and FSB Vandegrift.

On 17 March, the ARVN began Phase Four, the withdrawal phase of the operation. The armored brigade started pulling back eastward along Route 9, and the flanking divisions began evacuating their firebases by helicopter. At this point, the uncertain ARVN command system lost control of the operation. In spite of warnings and remonstrations from MACV and XXIV Corps, the South Vietnamese, foreshadowing the mistakes that were to contribute to their final debacle in 1975, attemped to withdraw too quickly with inadequate advance planning and coordination.[10] The result, for some units, was a near rout. The 1st Armored Brigade, its flank protection prematurely removed, ran into a series of NVA ambushes on Route 9 in which it lost or abandoned 60 percent of its tanks and half of its armored personnel carriers before straggling back into South Vietnam. The infantry, Airborne, and Marine divisions,* under continuous machine gun, mortar, and artillery fire, managed to extricate themselves from their positions, but they left behind many casualties and much equipment, including 96 artillery pieces. Recalling the withdrawal of Vietnamese Marine Corps units, Major John G. Miller noted that only the artillery units failed to perform well under pressure: "The VNMC artillery, which had grown lax under the benign shooting conditions of the Delta, was incapable of mastering the intricacies of computing map data, high-angle fire, etc. That is one reason the VNMC infantry commanders were often loath to bring it (artillery fire) closer than 1000 meters to friendlies . . . The infantry battalions were generally better led and gave a better account of themselves." U.S. aircraft had to attack many of the abandoned vehicles and guns to keep them out of enemy hands. By 6 April, the last South Vietnamese troops had left Laos.[11]

Marine Fixed Wing Air Support and the ASRT

Throughout Lam Son 719, Lieutenant General Robertson closely followed the progress of the battle. Robertson, who enjoyed a close working relationship with General Sutherland, regularly visited both XXIV Corps Forward and I Corps Headquarters, to confer with Sutherland and with Lieutenant General Lam on the offensive as a whole and on III MAF support of it. The III MAF commander explained that "it was certainly close enough that I had an interest in it and in turn, if I'm going to be number two [U.S.] commander [in MR 1], you never know what's going to happen . . . ."

Early in March, and again early in April, Robert-

*Brigadier General Alexander P. McMillan, who was acting Senior Marine Advisor (SMA) during two weeks of Lam Son 719, later disagreed with the contention that orders were frequently disobeyed, saying, "I can recall no specific instance of this . . . ." Alluding to the troubled politics of South Vietnam, where military commanders were often directly or indirectly enmeshed in politics, the SMA, Brigadier General Francis W. Tief, then a colonel, years later noted another reason for the apparent friction between the VNMC and General Lam: "General Lam constantly felt CMC [Commandant] VNMC was being groomed to relieve him as CG I Corps. Lieutenant General Khang was extremely careful not to enhance this feeling." Colonel John Miller, at the time a major, who advised the operations section of the VNMC in the combat operations center at Khe Sanh during the operation, said he saw one act of disobedience, the VNMC refusal to occupy Co Roc, an imposing mountain in Laos overlooking Khe Sanh: ". . . after Colonel Tief had returned to Khe Sanh and Colonel McMillan had gone back to Saigon . . . Colonel Lan had pulled all troops off Co Roc [occupied by less than a platoon], despite General Lam's direct order to defend that key terrain feature. Co Roc would have been a death trap for defending units about brigade strength." Miller added that "Lam was in a turbulent emotional state early on—after his chief of staff (and best friend) was killed in a helicopter crash." BGen Alexander P. McMillan, Comments on draft ms, 19Apr83; BGen Francis W. Tief, Comments on draft ms, 13Apr83; Col John G. Miller, Comments on draft ms, 19Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File).

*Colonel Miller, then at Khe Sanh, recalled the stress caused by the NVA counterattack: "One brigade commander, Col Thong (Brigade 147) cracked under the strain and was eased out of his command. During one 24-hour period, Colonel Lan (the division commander) went into virtual seclusion and Colonel Tief [the Senior Marine Advisor] was in effect calling the shots and keeping higher headquarters informed while trying to coax Lan out of his shell. We were all perplexed by this unexpected behavior from Lan." Col John G. Miller, Comments on draft ms, 19Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File). For more information on VNMC participation in Lam Son 719 see Chapter 21.

son temporarily commanded XXIV Corps during General Sutherland's absence. Robertson recalled:

> I moved in as commander of that Corps and . . . learned in a hurry that people, they'll work together and if you're all a bunch of professionals things go well. We never had any snags when I was commanding. I got full support from that staff up there. I knew many of them because of my close relationship with XXIV Corps. There used to be some surprised looks when there'd be visitors come in . . . that . . . walked in and [found] a Marine commanding an Army corps.[12]

Beginning on 31 January, jets from the 1st MAW—A-4Es of VMA-311, A-6As of VMA(AW)-225, and F-4Bs of VMFA-115—flew repeated missions in support of the ARVN units in Laos. Like the Navy and Air Force planes engaged in the operation, the Marine jets received target assignments from the Seventh Air Force, which had overall charge of fixed-wing support for the offensive.* During February, 1st MAW aircraft flew a total of 509 sorties** in support of Lam Son 719, dropping over 1,180 tons of ordnance.[13]

Marine pilots flying in support of Lam Son 719 attacked targets rarely encountered up to this point in the war—enemy tanks. On 27 February, for example, a flight of A-4E Skyhawks from VMA-311 led by Colonel Albert C. Pommerenk, commander of MAG-11, and by the squadron commander, Lieutenant Colonel Jerome T. Hagen, was diverted from a preplanned bombing mission to aid the besieged South Vietnamese defenders of Fire Support Base 31, eight miles inside Laos. Arriving over the battle area, the Marine aviators spotted five North Vietnamese light tanks, Russian-built PT-76s, moving up to support infantry who were already attacking the firebase. One tank, on a hilltop, was engaging the defenders at close range, while four others were climbing the hill to join it. ARVN artillery silenced the firing tank, and the Marines dove on the other four PT-76s, which turned around and started downhill toward a road. On the road, two of the tanks turned northward and the other two turned southward. Colonel Pommerenk released his bombs just ahead of the two southbound tanks, cratering the road and halting them. Lieutenant Colonel Hagen then made a bomb run on the tanks. "They knew I was coming," he recalled later, "They raised their cannons and fired at my aircraft." Hagen's bombs wrecked both tanks. The Marines then turned their attention to the other two PT-76s and destroyed one. The sole survivor escaped by driving off the road into the jungle, where the Marines lost sight of it.[14]

During March and the first part of April, Marine aircraft continued their support of Lam Son 719. By the time the last South Vietnamese had left Laos, the 1st MAW jets had flown almost 950 sorties and expended over 2,600 tons of ordnance, with no loss of aircraft. They received credit for desttoying 5 tanks, 16 trucks, 9 crew-served weapons, 87 bunkers, and 6 ammunition caches, killing 6 enemy soldiers, and touching off 248 secondary explosions. This Marine effort, significant though it was, represented only a small part of the massive allied air support given Lam Son 719. The U.S. Air Force, for instance, flew more than 9,000 tactical sorties during the operation and dropped over 14,000 tons of ordnance at a cost of seven aircraft destroyed. B-52s from Guam and Thailand conducted 615 strikes, and South Vietnamese and Australian aircraft also carried out missions in Laos.[15]

Besides contributing aircraft to support Lam Son 719, III MAF provided a vital air control facility. Lam Son 719 took place during the northeast monsoon, which brought frequent rain and fog to northern South Vietnam. On most days during the operation, low-lying fog persisted until noon, and by mid-afternoon, a mixture of clouds and dust and smoke from the fighting veiled the battlefield.[16] To conduct continuous air operations at night and during the bad weather, the allies relied on a mobile air support radar team (ASRT), specially developed by the Marine Corps for rapid deployment across the beach in an amphibious assault. Using the AN-TPQ-10 radar and a computer system, an ASRT could guide aircraft to an established target in fog, rain, or darkness.*

*The Seventh Air Force had a Direct Air Support Center (DASC) located with XXIV Corps Forward Headquarters at Quang Tri. This DASC received support requests from U.S. liaison officers at the ARVN division headquarters, which remained in South Vietnam, and from Air Force forward air controllers (FACs) in the skies over Laos. The FACs usually had English-speaking Vietnamese soldiers riding with them—a not always effective attempt to overcome the language barrier between the units on the ground and the American aircraft overhead. From the Quang Tri DASC, support requests went to Seventh Air Force Operations, which, under the single-management system then in effect, ordered missions by aircraft of all Services. A Seventh Air Force Airborne Battlefield Command and Control Center (ABCCC), a specially equipped transport plane, orbited over the battlefield to direct strike aircraft when they reached the battle area. MACV *ComdHist 71*, II, Anx E, pp. 21-22

**A sortie is one mission flown by one aircraft; 1st MAW jets regularly had flown in raids against the Ho Chi Minh Trail before Lam Son 719. See Chapter 15.

*For more detail on the ASRT and its operations, see Chapter 16.

Courtesy of Col John G. Miller, Jr., USMC (Ret)

An aerial view of the Vietnamese Marine Corps base at Khe Sanh, an I Corps forward operating base looking towards Laos. Co Roc looms in the far background. As in 1968 enemy observers positioned on Co Roc directed artillery fire to disrupt troop concentrations.

As Lam Son 719 began, Marine Air Support Squadron (MASS) 3, a subordinate unit of the 1st MAW, had three air support radar teams deployed in MR 1, at Da Nang, FSB Birmingham near Hue, and at Quang Tri. On 18 February, the Quang Tri ASRT was directed to prepare for displacement to Khe Sanh, where it would help support Lam Son 719. The following day, a 1st MAW truck convoy left Da Nang for Quang Tri to help the team pack its equipment; other Marines at Khe Sanh selected a site for the ASRT installation about one-half mile west of the newly reopened airfield. From this position, the ASRT, which could control aircraft anywhere within a 50-mile radius, could direct strikes throughout the Laotian battlefield. Preparation of the site for the team's arrival began on the 20th.

The Quang Tri ASRT was commanded by Captain Golden C. Kirkland, Jr., and consisted of Marine radar technicians from MASS-3 reinforced with communications personnel and a security platoon from Headquarters and Headquarters Support Squadron (H&HS) 18. At 1800 on 22 February, the team received orders to cease operations and begin movement to Khe Sanh. The unit had its electronic equipment dismantled and packed by 0630 the next morning, when the first Marine CH-53s arrived to begin airlifting the unit 25 miles westward to its new position. At 1430 the last load of equipment touched down at Khe Sanh, and within an hour Captain Kirkland's Marines had the system assembled, checked, and functioning. By 1801, the ASRT was directing Air Force, Navy, and Marine air strikes. The entire movement, from the order to pack up at Quang Tri to resumption of operations at Khe Sanh, had taken less than a day.

From 23 February until 31 March, when it returned to Quang Tri, the Khe Sanh ASRT remained in constant operation except for a 10-minute shutdown caused by a power failure. The team directed 960 sorties by U.S., Vietnamese, and Australian planes. After 31 March, the team continued to control strikes in Lam Son 719* from Quang Tri until the operation ended.[17]

Marine OV-10As from VMO-2 were also active during Lam Son 719. At the beginning of the operation, XXIV Corps used these versatile observation craft to plant 25 sttings of electronic sensors* on the approaches to Khe Sanh. The sensors were used, as others had been during the 1968 siege, to provide early warning of ground activity and spot targets for the artillery. On 1 March, the OV-10As planted 10 additional sensor strings to help protect Route 9 within South Vietnam. Air Force planes conducted all sensor drops inside Laos.[18]

*For additional detail on sensors and their use, see Chapter 15.

Marine Helicopters Over Laos

Of all the Marine aviators who participated in Lam Son 719, the helicopter pilots and crews of HMH-463 and HML-367 came under the heaviest enemy fire and played the most indispensable role. Operation Lam Son 719 was founded on the U.S.-developed tactics of leap-frogging troops and artillery into a series of fire support bases. Since the South Vietnamese Air Force could not begin to meet the helicopter requirements of an operation of this size, the U.S. Army was ordered to furnish almost all of the helicopter transport. The Army, however, possessed few helicopters powerful enough to lift very heavy loads, such as 14,000-pound 155mm howitzers and 17,000-pound D-4 bulldozers, into firebases many of which were up to 2,000 feet above sea level. Furthermore, when the offensive began, completion of the airfield at Khe Sanh was delayed, disrupting plans to stock the forward supply base by flying in cargoes on Air Force C-130s. This meant that vital supplies, in particular helicopter fuel, had to be brought in by truck and helicopter, creating an additional requirement for heavy rotary-wing freight carriers.[19]

While the Army lacked cargo helicopters suited to the requirements of Lam Son 719, the Marines had them: the 18 Sikorsky CH-53D Sea Stallions of Lieutenant Colonel Robert R. Leisy's HMH-463. The CH-53s, the largest helicopters in the Marine Corps, had been developed for ship-to-shore movement of the heaviest equipment. Able to lift external loads of as much as 18,000 pounds, they routinely moved 155mm howitzers and bulldozers, as well as massive quantities of supplies and downed smaller helicopters.

Late in January, as planning for Lam Son 719 was nearing completion, XXIV Corps directed III MAF to support the operation with aircraft from HMH-463. With Marine helicopters about to be committed, Lieutenant General Robertson and the wing commander, Major General Armstrong, suggested to Lieutenant General Sutherland that the Marines also furnish their own escorting gunships. Robertson later declared that "this is the way Marines functioned. If we're going to send a 53 out there where there's a lot of fire, we'll cover it with our own aircraft . . . ."[20] Sutherland readily agreed to this proposal. HML-367, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Clifford E. Reese and equipped with AH-1G Cobra gunships, received the escort assignment.

Lieutenant Colonel Leisy at once put his CH-53 pilots and crews to work preparing for the Laotian operation. He especially emphasized practice in lifting heavy loads into and out of high-altitude landing zones. During the last week of January, eight crews from HMH-463 spent part of each day picking up a 15,000-pound block of cement, flying it to the 2,000-foot peak of Monkey Mountain, the rugged peninsula northeast of Da Nang, landing it there, and then bringing it back to Marble Mountain. After they had mastered the basic technique, the Marine aviators practiced with 155mm howitzers, the artillery pieces they were to lift in Laos.[21]

Actual squadron operations began on 30 January, when four Sea Stallions hauled heavy equipment for the 101st Airborne Division to staging areas near Quang Tri. These flights continued on 31 January and on 3 and 5 February. On 6 February, as preparations for the assault into Laos neared completion, eight CH-53Ds escorted by six AH-1Gs made 34 lifts of Army guns, supplies, and fuel to Khe Sanh from Camp Carroll. The following day, the Marines established their own forward operating base at Landing Zone Kilo, two miles south of the Khe Sanh airfield. At Kilo, helicopters flown up daily from Marble Mountain would land to receive orders and take on cargo for missions into Laos. On 8 February, eight Sea Stallions made HMH-463's first out-of-country flight of the operation. They carried ARVN guns, ammunition, and engineering equipment from LZ Kilo to Fire Support Base Hotel, just across the Laotian border. From then on, the big helicopters ventured daily further and further into Laos with their loads of howitzers, artillery rounds, bulldozers, and supplies for new firebases.[22]

As the offensive continued through February and into March, Marine helicopter operations fell into a pattern. Each day at 0800, usually four CH-53Ds and four AH-1Gs took off from Marble Mountain and flew to LZ Kilo. There, the pilots were briefed on their assignments, picked up cargoes, and took off for Laos. After each mission, the CH-53Ds and gunships returned to LZ Kilo to refuel, rearm, and receive new orders.

The Marine aircraft, like the Army helicopters involved in Lam Son 719, were under the operational control of the 101st Airborne Division's organic aviation unit, the 101st Combat Aviation Group. The group headquarters received support requirements from XXIV Corps and issued mission orders to Army and Marine helicopters. At Landing Zone Kilo, Major Rocco F. Valluzzi, S-1 of HMH-463, was the Marine Air Coordination Officer. Valluzzi, a veteran of more

than 200 missions in CH-53s, briefed pilots, maintained communications with his helicopters, and directed Army crews in preparing loads for the CH-53s.[23]

Mission assignments became a matter of dispute between III MAF and XXIV Corps as the operation developed. Initially, the CH-53s had been brought in to carry unusually heavy pieces of artillery and equipment, but as the battle expanded, the Marines often found themselves flying in general support of the South Vietnamese, hauling all sorts of supplies and occasionally troops in the face of steadily increasing enemy antiaircraft fire. The Marines believed that many of these missions were not urgent enough to require endangering the valuable heavy helicopters, or could be carried out by smaller craft. At the request of Major General Armstrong, Lieutenant General Robertson, during one of his periods as acting commander of XXIV Corps, convinced the Army authorities to make more discriminating use of the CH-53s. According to Robertson:

> . . . When I straightened it out . . . I talked to my deputy [at XXIV Corps] who was an Army major general and a fine officer. I said, . . . "They have to start using these things properly. Let me just phrase it this way. [Would] you people in the Army use your helicopter crane for the mission that this heavy Marine helicopter was being used for knowing the amount of money you pay for it and what it's worth?" He said, "No, we wouldn't." I said, "That's the same way you have to look at the CH-53." . . . No problems. The thing changed immediately . . . .[24]

As the offensive moved westward into Laos, so did the Marine helicopters. By late March, the CH-53Ds and accompanying Cobras were flying as far as FSB Sophia II near Tchepone, over 30 miles from the South Vietnamese border. Working mostly in support of the ARVN 1st Division, the Sea Stallions armed, supplied, and reinforced a succession of South Vietnamese firebases. Often, as planned, they lifted bulldozers and 155mm howitzers.

Marine helicopter crews flying into Laos had to contend with inevitable poor visibility and North Vietnamese fire. As the fighting spread across the mountains between Tchepone and the South Vietnamese border, clouds of dust and smoke from the battle reduced visibility around the fire bases. Rotor wash from the helicopters further stirred up and mixed the man-made fog of battle, which thickened the monsoon overcast.[25]

North Vietnamese antiaircraft weapons were many and well-served. The advancing allied ground troops had overrun or forced removal of most of the heavier antiaircraft guns, but the NVA had an abundance of light antiaircraft guns and continually mortared firebases and landing zones. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas S. Reap, who succeeded Leisy in command of HMH-463 on 5 March, reported:

Courtesy of Col John G. Miller, USMC (Ret)

A U.S. Army Boeing Vertol CH-47 resupply helicopter hovers at Khe Sanh, while a U.S. Marine advisor is about to hook up the container to the aircraft.

> Helicopters were subject to constant . . . NVA small arms and .50-caliber machine gun fire. Tracers from 23mm antiaircraft guns were visible, and air bursts from 37mm and 57mm guns were a daily occurence. We even had reports from ground observers that the choppers were taking direct fire from tanks.[26]

Marines involved in Lam Son 719 found that the Army method of controlling helicopters, which was less centralized than that of the Marine Corps, increased the danger from enemy ground fire. The Army had no system for rapidly informing its helicopter units of the location of NVA antiaircraft positions as they

were spotted by aerial reconnaissance or by helicopters flying missions. This made it impossible to plan routes of approach to landing zones to avoid the heaviest enemy fire. According to Major General Armstrong:

> . . . Timely information was simply not available. They do not have the possibility or the mechanism to exchange information on what the situation is in a timely fashion. For example, somebody's integral helicopters go dashing over to a place and find it's hotter than hell and seven or eight of 'em get shot down. Fifteen minutes later, some other package comes dashing across the same area and the same thing happens to 'em. They do not have a command and control system for their helicopters . . . [27]

In spite of the continuous fire encountered, only one HMH-463 aircraft was lost during the missions in Laos. This loss occurred late in the afternoon of 23 February as a flight of four CH-53Ds was lifting 155mm howitzers out of FSB Hotel II. The position, eight miles inside Laos and south of Route 9, was under heavy North Vietnamese attack, and the South Vietnamese had decided to evacuate it and establish another firebase nearby. Enemy machine guns and mortars were firing at the landing zone as the Marine helicopters came in. In the fading light, clouds and smoke restricted the pilots' view of the area.

While escorting Cobras strafed and rocketed enemy gun positions, the helicopters made several trips in and out of Hotel II, removing a number of howitzers. At dusk, as a CH-53D piloted by the flight leader, Major Michael J. Wasko, Jr., the squadron S-3, hovered to hook on another artillery piece, several mortar shells exploded nearby, damaging the helicopter and injuring Wasko's copilot. The crippled CH-53 settled to the ground inside the firebase. Another CH-53, flown by Captain Robert F. Wemheuer, hovered for several minutes, dangerously exposed in the fire-swept LZ, while three crew members from Wasko's helicopter attached themselves to its extraction ladder. Then Wemheuer's craft safely flew off with the rescued Marines. Major Wasko remained behind to assist the injured copilot, until both men were picked up by an Army UH-1.[28]

The damaged CH-53D remained in the firebase. Its size and weight prevented it from being lifted out by another helicopter. On the 25th, Captain Henry J. Cipolla, a maintenance officer with HMH-463, and Gunnery Sergeant Ronald S. Severson, a flight line chief, volunteered to go in and inspect the downed craft. Although the position was under enemy fire, the two Marines worked their way from a nearby landing zone to the CH-53D. They found that it could not be repaired where it was; it had 500-700 shrapnel holes in rotors, engines, and fuselage and major airframe damage. Cipolla and Severson stripped the hulk of weapons and coding equipment and made their way back to their landing zone, where they helped evacuate four wounded ARVN soldiers before boarding a helicopter themselves. Eventually, U.S. air strikes had to destroy the wreck to keep it out of enemy hands.[29]

Wasko's was the only Marine aircraft shot down during Lam Son 719,* although the squadron later counted a total of over 80 bullet and shrapnel holes in 18 CH-53s. Marines gave much credit for this low rate of loss to the gunships of HML-367. The AH-1G Cobras escorted every CH-53 flight into Laos. They led the transports into the landing zones, spotted friendly and enemy positions, and then attacked the NVA antiaircraft guns and mortars with machine guns, automatic grenade launchers, and 2.75-inch rockets. When the enemy were too close to ARVN firebases to permit actual attacks, the Cobra pilots often made dummy strafing runs to distract enemy gunners from the CH-53Ds, or maneuvered their gunships between the NVA positions and the transports. During the month of February alone, the Cobras expended 847 rockets, 5,605 40mm grenades, and 20,750 rounds of machine gun ammunition in support of Lam Son 719. In spite of the dangers of their mission, no Cobras were shot down during the offensive, although one suffered electrical system failure over Laos and just managed to limp back to a safe landing zone.[30]

Beginning on 2 March, the AH-1Gs of HML-367 were joined by four new Bell AH-1J "Sea Cobra" gunships. These twin-engined helicopters, armed with a three-barrelled 20mm cannon, as well as machine guns and rockets, had been sent to Vietnam for combat evaluation. Temporarily attached to HML-367, the Sea Cobras regularly escorted the CH-53Ds. Marine aviators welcomed their additional firepower and appreciated the greater safety provided by their two jet engines. As Major General Armstrong put it, "It made people feel a hell of a lot better to be flying a twin-engine Cobra into Laos than a single-engine Cobra . . . ."[31]

*Earlier, on 18 February, another CH-53 exploded in the air and crashed northeast of Hue/Phu Bai while returning to Marble Mountain from support of Lam Son 719. The entire crew of five and two passengers were killed. CG III MAF msg to CG XXIV Corps, dtd 18 Feb 71; III MAF Spot Rpt, dtd 18Feb71, both in III MAF Jnl & Msg File, 19-28Feb71.

Besides the protection offered by the Cobras and Sea Cobras, the performance of the CH-53Ds themselves kept losses down. Major Myrddyn E. Edwards, executive officer of HMH-463, declared that "Our biggest advantage was the helicopter's power—we would get in and out fast."[32] The CH-53D demonstrated its capabilities on 11 March during a movement of 155mm howitzers from Fire Support Base Hotel to another ARVN FSB four miles away. An aircraft flown by First Lieutenant Larry J. Larson came in to drop off supplies and pick up one of the howitzers from the landing zone. Hotel was 1,500 feet above sea level and on this occasion wind was gusting to 40-50 miles per hour. Under enemy fire as usual, Larson hooked up the howitzer and lifted off. As he did so, a .50 caliber machine gun bullet hit one of his engines. Larson had to shut down the damaged engine, but he was still able to carry the howitzer to a landing zone 1,000 meters from Hotel, place the artillery piece safely on the ground, and fly back to Marble Mountain.[33]

During the last half of March, Marine helicopter activity in Lam Son 719 declined. The decline occurred partly because the offensive was nearly ended and because after 11 March General Robertson insisted that CH-53s be confined more strictly to heavy lifts. During most of February and the first half of March, four CH-53s normally made a total of 20-40 lifts per day from LZ Kilo. Between 11 and 18 March, the daily number of aircraft was reduced to three and then to two, making two to seven lifts. Activity increased again as HMH-463 assisted the ARVN withdrawal. On 23 March, three aircraft made 11 lifts and on 27 March, the last day of operations in Laos for HMH-463, four CH-53Ds made 10 lifts.[34]

A U.S. Army CH-47 helicopter is shown bringing back from Laos a disabled Huey helicopter, hit by North Vietnamese gunfire in Operation Lam Son 719.
Courtesy of Col John G. Miller, USMC (Ret)

The CH-53Ds of HMH-463 flew 2,992 sorties in support of Lam Son 719. They carried over 6,500 tons of cargo and 2,500 passengers. Demonstrating their great lift capabilities, the big helicopters placed 15 eight-ton loads, 22 seven-and-one-half-ton loads, 62 seven-ton loads, and 209 six-and-one-half-ton loads in landing zones above 2,000 feet in altitude. Escorting gunships completed 1,899 sorties. Compared to the Army's total of 45,828 helicopter sorties in Laos and 118,614 in South Vietnam in support of the offensive, with 601 helicopters damaged and 102 destroyed, the Marine contribution seemed modest; the Marine helicopters, nevertheless, had furnished a specialized capability which the other Services could not provide.[35]

Marine Trucks on Route 9

Within South Vietnam, Route 9 was the principal supply line for the over 40,000 troops involved in Lam Son 719. The U.S. Army Support Command (Da Nang) established a base support area for the offensive near Quang Tri and two forward support areas (FSAs): FSA-1 at FSB Vandegrift and FSA-2 at Khe Sanh. These forward bases were to be stocked by air and by supplies trucked via Route 9. The delay in opening the Khe Sanh airstrip, besides creating a need for more helicopters in the first days of the offensive, also led to a search for more trucks. Once again, XXIV Corps turned to III MAF for support.

On 6 February, XXIV Corps directed III MAF to furnish trucks and heavy-duty forklifts to support Lam Son 719 for about one week. Not wanting to send a piecemeal transportation element, Lieutenant General Robertson decided to send a complete transportation unit, a reinforced Marine truck company tailored to perform the mission required by XXIV Corps.[36] Robertson explained:

> . . . I said [to Lieutenant General Sutherland], "You tell me what your mission is and what you want me to help you with. I've got the drivers, I've got the organization and we'll do it for you." He said, "Great." So, we discussed the size of our elements and we ended up giving him a truck company reinforced. I provided all my people, the organization, commanding officer and the whole works and we merely chopped them over to their operation[al] control. . . . This is the way we functioned when we had elements go in. I don't believe in piecemealing and I wanted to make sure that we had Marines in command . . . .[37]

Late on the 6th, the 1st Marine Division, at the instruction of III MAF, selected Company C of the 11th

Motor Transport Battalion to support Lam Son 719. The truck company, commanded by First Lieutenant Michael A. Humm, was reinforced with Marines from other truck companies and from the 1st Engineer Battalion, the 1st Shore Party Battalion, Force Logistic Command, the 1st Marine Division Headquarters Battalion, and the 1st MAW. The company had an assortment of specialized vehicles attached to it, including low-bed tractor-trailors and 10 heavy-duty forklifts, each capable of carrying loads of up to 6,000 pounds over rough terrain.[38]

Company C left Da Nang for Quang Tri at 0500 on 7 February with 46 vehicles and four Marine officers and 79 enlisted men.[39] With aerial observers overhead, the convoy rolled up Route 1 in two segments, or "serials." At Phu Bai, halfway to Quang Tri, the convoy's Army military police escort diverted the Marine trucks to Tan My Ramp, a deep-water port east of Hue to which ships were bringing supplies for Lam Son 719. The Marines took on a load of northbound freight and then headed for Quang Tri, where they were to join an Army convoy to finish the trip to FSB Vandegrift, their base of operations.

Company C reached Quang Tri late on the afternoon of the 7th. There, Lieutenant Humm reported to the commander of the 39th U.S. Army Transportation Battalion, which had operational control of the Marine unit, and was briefed on his mission. The Army planned for the Marine truck company to use Vandegrift (FSA-1) as a freight transfer point. The heavy low-bed trailor trucks were to make daily runs from Vandegrift east over the paved portion of Route 9 to the junction with Route 1 at Dong Ha and then down to Tan My to pick up cargo from the ships and return. At Vandegrift, this freight would be loaded on the company's M54 medium five-ton trucks. These smaller, more maneuverable vehicles would make the haul out to Khe Sanh over the unpaved, hastily improved, section of Route 9. The forklifts initially were to be sent to Khe Sanh and Vandegrift.

As part of a large Army truck convoy, Company C left Quang Tri at 2330 and headed westward out Route 9. At 0100 on the 8th, just south of the Rockpile, the convoy was ambushed. The NVA opened fire, destroying two Army 5,000-gallon fuel trucks and a gun truck, killing one soldier, and wounding 10 others. The Marines, who suffered no losses in either men or vehicles, helped fight off the enemy, and the convoy continued on to Vandegrift. The trucks rolled into FSA-1 at 0730.

The same day they arrived at Vandegrift, the Marines of Company C sent out their first truck convoys, 17 vehicles to Khe Sanh and 12 low-bed tractor-trailers to Tan My. The company quickly established its command post, troop billets, maintenance area, and first aid station, all protected by prepared fighting positions and barbed wire entanglements. Soon after settling in at Vandegrift, the company was reinforced by two Marine 5,000-gallon fuel tankers, sent from Da Nang to replace the Army tankers destroyed in the ambush on Route 9. Recalling the speed with which the reinforced truck company was organized and dispatched from Da Nang to Vandegrift, General Robertson said, "you talk about Marines really turning to! But this is the way we functioned."[40]

From 9 to 14 February, Company C daily sent 14 to 20 trucks to Khe Sanh, and, on every day but the 11th, it dispatched 10-12 trucks to Tan My. Each contingent of Marine trucks bound for Khe Sanh travelled with an Army truck convoy, but in keeping with General Robertson's guidance, as a separate unit under a Marine commanding officer responsible to the Army convoy commander. On their round trips to Tan My, the tractor-trailers ran as independent Marine convoys.

The Marine truckers encountered frequent enemy sniping along Route 9 between Vandegrift and Khe Sanh, as well as rocket and mortar attacks at FSB Vandegrift. On 10 February, the North Vietnamese fired 15-20 122mm rockets at the firebase, which inflicted minor damage on several Marine trailers. Six more rockets exploded near a Khe Sanh-bound convoy the next day, killing four Army soldiers and wounding one soldier and one Marine. The Marine, only slightly injured, was Company C's only casualty of the operation. Enemy rockets landed near the company area again on the 13th but did no damage. On the roads, in spite of frequent sniper and mortar fire, Marine trucks suffered no combat losses; but two five-ton M54s were damaged in accidents. Both trucks were recovered and brought back to Da Nang.

On 14 February, Company C received orders to prepare for return to III MAF. An 11-vehicle relief convoy from the 11th Motor Transport Battalion left Da Nang for Vandegrift the same day to bring up additional heavy forklifts, as well as wreckers to recover the disabled trucks. This convoy reached Company C late on the 14th.[41] At 0930 on the 15th, the company departed FSB Vandegrift for Da Nang at 1730. During their short time in Lam Son 719, Company C's trucks drove

30,717 miles under combat conditions. They carried 1,050 tons of supplies and conducted 15 convoys in eight days.[42]

When the truck company left, a 13-man forklift detachment from Company C, 1st Shore Party Battalion, with Captain Merrill T. Morton as officer in charge, remained at Khe Sanh and Vandegrift. Morton's Marines, with 10 forklifts, were reinforced with two more forklifts and three Marines, brought up by the relieving convoy, on the 15th. With their powerful machines, especially designed to move freight over rough ground, the Marines helped the Army's 26th Support Group to unload trucks and aircraft at the two forward supply bases. Initially divided between Khe Sanh and Vandegrift, the entire detachment was concentrated at Khe Sanh on 21 February and worked there through the end of March. In 52 days of activity, the Marine forklift operators moved over 56,000 tons of supplies.[43]

Marine communicators also operated at Khe Sanh and Vandegrift during Lam Son 719. The Radio/Supporting Arms Platoon, Communications Company, Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division had the mission of keeping both the truck company and wing elements in contact with their parent headquarters in Da Nang. Because Communications Company was standing down for redeployment, it was augmented by Marines of Communications Support Company. According to the platoon commander of Radio/Supporting Arms Platoon, First Lieutenant Ronald C. Hood III, III MAF "wanted a direct Marine-only link back to the rear . . . , to make sure that Marine commanders could talk with Marine commanders over Marine equipment," and to assure quick transmission of emergency requests for resupply or equipment replacement.

Throughout the operation, the platoon maintained a six-man team with two radio jeeps in northern Quang Tri. A Marine CH-53 flew the radio team and its equipment to Quang Tri City on 7 February to meet the Company C truck convoy. The Marines activated their long-distance radio on the 8th. They operated from Vandegrift initially, keeping the truck company in contact with the 11th Motor Transport Battalion CP and also supplementing the communications of the road convoys. After the trucks returned to Da Nang, the radio teams moved to Khe Sanh to better support 1st MAW elements at LZ Kilo. Lieutenant Hood rotated his men in the north periodically, to give all of them experience in this type of operation. The Marine communicators came under sporadic mortar fire at Vandegrift; in fact, the enemy mortar units appeared to be adjusting fire on the Marines' 50-foot high antennas. According to Lieutenant Hood, who spent much time with his troops along Route 9, "Every time there was some kind of bombardment, you could see the rounds coming in and out on the antennas"; but the Marine communicators suffered no casualties or major equipment damage during their nearly two months in Lam Son 719. On 21 March, they ceased operations at Khe Sanh and returned to Da Nang, where their parent battalion was standing down for redeployment.[44]

Courtesy of Capt Chalmers R. Hood, Jr., USMC

A member of the Radio/Supporting Arms Platoon, Communications Company reinstalls a radio antenna that was knocked down by enemy artillery fire.

Diversion Off Vinh

When allied commanders began planning for Lam Son 719 late in 1970, they considered the initiation of diversionary operations to distract North Vietnamese attention and, it was hoped, North Vietnamese forces from the actual objective area. Admiral John S. McCain, Jr., Commander in Chief, Pacific, took the initiative in this aspect of the planning. On 31 December, he sent General Abrams a detailed proposal for an amphibious feint against southern North Vietnam. McCain suggested that the U.S. set up a joint amphibious task force headquarters at Subic Bay in the Philippines and that U.S. and South Vietnamese forces conduct all the preliminary rehearsals, ship and troop movements, reconnaissance, and even air strikes and shore raids that would precede an actual invasion. McCain wanted to use both American and Vietnamese air and naval units for this purpose, as well as elements of the Vietnamese Marine Corps.[45]

On 7 January, General Abrams approved the diversion plan, in principle, but declared that he could spare neither U.S. nor RVNAF forces to carry it out. McCain, therefore, decided to use the amphibious ready group of the Seventh Fleet to conduct a more modest diversion, a simulated helicopter-borne raid on the North Vietnamese coast by a U.S. Marine battalion.*[46]

The task of conducting the diversion was assigned to the Seventh Fleet's Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) Alpha, Task Group (TG) 76.4, and to the 31st Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU). Until 1969, the MAU, which consisted of an infantry battalion landing team (BLT) and a composite helicopter squadron, had been known as the Special Landing Force (SLF) and regularly employed in operations in South Vietnam. With the redeployment to Okinawa of the 3d Marine Division, from which the BLT was drawn, the MAU, as it was now designated, could not reenter Vietnam without special permission from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but it could cruise anywhere on the high seas, including the seas off the coast of Vietnam.**

At the end of January 1971, the 31st MAU, commanded by Colonel Lawrence A. Marousek, consisted of Lieutenant Colonel Francis X. Frey's Battalion Landing Team 3/9*** and HMM-165, under Lieutenant Colonel Herbert M. Herther. The composite helicopter squadron contained UH-1Es and CH-53s as well as its usual CH-46s.[47]

On 1 February, the 31st MAU, then at Subic Bay in the Philippines, was ordered to embark on the amphibious ready group's ships**** and sail for Da Nang. The Marines finished loading at 0130 on the 2d and the ships steamed out of Subic Bay at 0800. While at sea, the task group received its instructions for the diversion off North Vietnam. The 31st MAU and the amphibious ready group staffs began joint detailed planning for the operation. The ARG arrived at the Southern Holding Area off Da Nang on the 4th.[48]

From 5-10 February, the task group remained at sea near Da Nang, preparing for its mission. By the 7th, the staffs of the 31st MAU and BLT 3/9 had completed plans for the diversion which was to be a helicopter-borne raid on the airfield at Vinh, about 150 miles north of the Demilitarized Zone. The Marines prepared a full operation plan for an attack by two companies of BLT 3/9. The companies were to go ashore by helicopter, seize and demolish the airfield, and withdraw to the ships within 24 hours. The operation order prepared jointly by the Marine and Navy staffs, included all the usual annexes for air and naval gunfire support, communications, logistics, and intelligence and provided elaborate procedures for withdrawing the raiding companies by boat, if helicopters could not extract them.[49]

After completing the plans, the MAU conducted a communications exercise in rehearsing the planned feint. It also landed 4,000 pounds of explosives and detonating equipment furnished by III MAF and arranged with the 1st MAW to furnish Cobra gunships to reinforce HMM-165 if necessary. The gunships were to remain on call at Da Nang, ready to fly on board the USS *Iwo Jima* (LPH 2) on short notice.[50]

On 11 February, Task Group 76.4 headed north from Da Nang into the Gulf of Tonkin. Few of the Marines on board knew the actual purpose of their mission. In HMM-165, for example, only the commanding officer and his executive and operations officers had been fully briefed on the plan, and even they were not told that it was a feint until long after sailing. Until then, Lieutenant Colonel Jon R. Robson, the executive officer, recalled, "we . . . firmly believed that we might have to go in and try and take Vinh with a battalion of Marines." Marines in both the squadron and the battalion realized that they were preparing for an amphibious raid of some sort, and as the ships steamed steadily northward hour after hour, they realized that the objective would be somewhere in North Vietnam. Both air and ground Marines, therefore, readied themselves for their parts of the mission "with all the fears and anxieties . . . of actually going in and performing the mission as briefed, as little as it was

*On 3 February, Lieutenant General Sutherland, the XXIV Corps Commander, also proposed to MACV an elaborate diversion plan, again involving amphibious forces; this plan was set aside in favor of the CincPac plan, which then was already being implemented. Sutherland msg to Gen Abrams, dtd 3Feb71, and Abrams msg to Sutherland, dtd 4Feb71, copies in MCHC.

**For extended discussion of the organization and operations of the MAU in 1970-1971, see Chapter 21.

***BLT 3/9 was made up of the entire 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, with the following units attached: Battery F, 2d Battalion, 12th Marines; 1st Platoon, Company D, 3d Reconnaissance Battalion; 2d Platoon, Company B, 1st AmTrac Battalion; 1st Platoon, Company A, 3d Shore Party Battalion; 2d Platoon, Company A, 3d Motor Transport Battalion; 2d Platoon, Company B, 3d Tank Battalion; 3d Platoon, Company A, 3d Engineer Battalion; 2d Platoon, Company B, 3d Medical Battalion; and detachments from the 3d Service Battalion and 3d Dental Company.

****The vessels of the ARG were: USS *Tulare* (LKA 112), USS *Iwo Jima* (LPH-2), USS *Cleveland* (LPD-7), and USS *Westchester County* (LST 1167).

briefed." The BLT issued ammunition and organized the landing companies into helicopter reams.[51]

The amphibious task group arrived at a point 50 miles east of Vinh on the 12th. From then through 6 March, in cooperation with two carriers and their escort vessels, the 31st MAU conducted daily rehearsals for the raid while the ships conducted maneuvers and communications exercises.[52] Each day, HMM-165's helicopters went through the motions of loading troops, without actually emplaning them. Then they flew in toward the coast to a prearranged point just outside the 12-mile limit of North Vietnam's territorial waters where they often descended at the end of their shoreward run to make the enemy think that they were going in under the NVA radar screen. At a predetermined check point they reversed course and flew back to the carrier. Meanwhile, the BLT conducted communications exercises and shipboard drills, including familiarization firing.

According to Major William J. Sambito, squadron operations officer during the diversion:

> The actual launching itself was done by putting some of the [helicopters] on the *Cleveland* [LPD-7] and the remainder of them came off the LPH. And we had two launchings, or the deck was spotted twice, and we'd launch and rendezvous the first wave, and then . . . launch the second wave and join up with as many planes as we could get off in two launches and head in, and we'd be under HDC control, which would give us a time hack, and at the end of that time unless we'd received further word we'd make a . . . 180 [degree turn] and just come directly back to the ships. And we did that once in the morning about eight o'clock . . . and then . . . some days we did it in the afternoon also . . . . We'd try to break up the routine a little bit to create a little bit more confusion.[53]

Lieutenant Colonel Robson declared that if the North Vietnamese "had a Landing Force Manual out there, they could have seen exactly what we were doing." The ships engaged in the communications and electronics activity that would have accompanied an actual assault, and jets from the carriers continually flew missions as though providing cover for a raid. Throughout, "we tried everything in the world to make them think that we were really going to do something every day we launched."

The diversion attracted much enemy attention and caused some troop redeployments. The ships reported increasingly intense surveillance by enemy radar, and North Vietnamese reconnaissance aircraft frequently probed the task group's own radar screens. Toward the end of the operations, the 31st MAU received reports the NVA ground formations were moving northward toward Vinh from the DMZ.*

A trawler from the USSR continually shadowed the American ships. "During a routine man overboard drill," recalled Navy Captain Tracy H. Wilder, commander of the amphibious task group, "a dummy was thrown overboard from the *Iwo Jima*. As she circled to retrieve it, the trawler darted in ahead to investigate. Upon sighting the dummy, she cleared the area allowing *Iwo Jima* to complete the exercise." The trawler later approached the task group to send a "Happy Washington's Birthday" blinker message.[54]

Raid rehearsals continued until 7 March, with no casualties or unusual incidents. Indeed, Major Sambito remembered the operation as "very boring, very unexciting, except for the tension that a few of us had." BLT 3/9's Marines had been afloat for 54 days by the end of February, with only three days ashore at Subic. The battalion made special efforts to combat boredom through training activities, a shipboard newsletter, informal talk sessions, competitions, and talent contests. On the 7th, Task Group 76.4 sailed from the Gulf of Tonkin for Okinawa, bringing the diversion to an end.

Results of Lam Son 719

The effects of Lam Son 719 on the course of the war are difficult to assess, as was true of so many operations in Vietnam. Both sides suffered severely. South Vietnamese casualties amounted to 1,549 men killed, 5,483 wounded, and 651 missing. U.S. forces involved in the operation reported 215 killed, 1,149 wounded, and 38 missing. ARVN equipment losses included 298 vehicles, 54 tanks, 1,516 radios, and 31 bulldozers. Of the ARVN units most heavily engaged, U.S. advisors reported after the battle that the Airborne Division had lost 40 percent of its key officers and NCOs and that the 1st Armored Brigade was only "marginally combat effective due to personnel and equipment shortages." The American advisors rated the 1st Division and the Marine Division more favorably, declaring them still combat effective after withdrawal from Laos, although these formations, also, had taken severe casualties.

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*A propagandistic North Vietnamese history of Lam Son 719, published in 1971, took this diversion with apparent seriousness, declaring that "Mention should also be made of the direct participation of the 7th Fleet, which . . . kept North Vietnam under constant threat of invasion by several thousand Marines on board American ships cruising off the Vietnamese shore." *From Khe Sanh to Chepone* (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1971), p. 22.

According to allied estimates, the North Vietnamese, who had massed their forces to attack in the face of superior supporting arms, had lost at least 13,000 soldiers killed. Allied troops claimed to have captured or destroyed 5,170 individual and 1,963 crew-served weapons, 2,001 trucks, 106 tanks, and more than 20,000 tons of ammunition, not counting ammunition the North Vietnamese had expended in the fighting. In addition, the enemy had lost about 90,000 gallons of fuel and lubricants and 1,250 tons of food.[55]

Allied commanders believed that Lam Son 719 had thrown the enemy off balance strategically. Temporarily, at least, the offensive disrupted the southward movement of North Vietnamese troops and supplies; it forced the Communists to commit men and material to the Laos compaign that otherwise would have gone to South Vietnam. Rebuilding and restocking of the base areas between Tchepone and the Vietnamese border would occupy the enemy for most of the 1971 dry season, thereby assuring postponement of any immediate major offensive, and causing a reduced level of enemy activity in MR 1 for most of the year. Prophetically, as it turned out, the MACV command history for 1971 stated that "Lam Son 719 might even have forestalled any major offensive until the spring of 1972."[56]

In Lam Son 719, for the first time, the South Vietnamese conducted a multi-division offensive without the assistance of U.S. advisors; most command and control responsibility fell upon the ARVN commanders and their staffs. While the ARVN performance had been uneven, most U.S. commanders insisted that the overall results gave encouraging evidence that the Vietnamese were learning how to fight their own war.

Lieutenant General Sutherland, the XXIV Corps commander, acknowledged some major ARVN shortcomings, including "a lack of effective long-range planning by higher level staffs, a serious disregard for communications security, a general lack of a sense of supply discipline, and a failure to delegate authority to subordinates." Nevertheless, he pointed out that "without U.S. advisors" and without the possibility of reinforcement or direct support by U.S. ground combat forces, the ARVN had "carried the war into an enemy controlled area, far removed from the familiar confines of their normal areas of operation . . . ." Sutherland concluded:

> The forces that participated in Lam Son 719 proved that the Republic of Vietnam possess[es] a viable military organization that is significantly more capable, cohesive and better led than the military organization that existed . . . only three years ago. The overall results of Lam Son 719 indicate that Vietnamization is progressing well in MR 1 . . . .[57]

Even in such optimistic assessments, nevertheless, U.S. commanders had to acknowledge one disturbing fact: the ARVN had depended heavily on American helicopter and fixed-wing air support at every stage of the Laotian offensive, both to launch the attack in the first place and then to rescue the South Vietnamese from the worst consequences of their own military deficiencies. The South Vietnamese Armed Forces had yet to prove that, by themselves, they could defeat the North Vietnamese Army in a major conventional battle. Vietnamization, whatever progress could be reported, remained an unequal contest between the slow pace of RVNAF improvement and the inexorably quickening pace of American withdrawal.

CHAPTER 12

Last Operations of III MAF, January-March 1971

Plans for the Army Takeover of Quang Nam—Operations in Quang Nam, January-February 1971
Keystone Robin Charlie Begins—The Pacification Effort Diminishes—The Enemy Grows Bolder

Plans for the Army Takeover of Quang Nam

As 1971 began, planning for the removal of most of the remaining Marines from Vietnam was far advanced. The sixth and last segment of the 150,000-man redeployment ordered by President Nixon on 2 April 1970, codenamed Keystone Robin Charlie, was to begin early in February. This withdrawal would take out 12,400 Marines, including the 5th Marines, III MAF, 1st Marine Division, and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing Headquarters. The Marines left in Quang Nam then were to constitute the 3d Marine Amphibious Brigade, the organization and composition of which had been exhaustively debated and refined during the past year. Marines expected the life of the MAB to be short and that the brigade would probably redeploy during late April, May, and June.

MAF, division, and wing staffs now concentrated on two interlocked and important questions: how to extract the redeploying Marines from combat without abruptly reducing pressure on the enemy, and what allied force would replace III MAF in Quang Nam. XXIV Corps plans for Quang Nam had changed repeatedly during the fall of 1970, as MACV debated whether to include either or both the 101st Airborne Division and the Americal Division in the early 1971 redeployments. By mid-October, tentative Army plans called for both divisions to remain until well after the last Marines had withdrawn and for the Americal Division at some point to move one of its brigades into the Da Nang area while the other two continued operations in Quang Tin and Quang Ngai Provinces. As 1970 ended, the identity of the brigade which was to relieve the Marines and the exact timing of its deployment to Quang Nam still had not been settled.[1]

Generals McCutcheon and Robertson continually pressed XXIV Corps for decisions on these latter points to guide III MAF's withdrawal planning. Robertson recalled:

> . . . I'd go to XXIV Corps and say to my good friend, [Lieutenant General] Sutherland, "What are your plans? Who are you going to put up there? Even if they are not firm, give me an idea. We've got to start talking with your people . . . ." Until you get the two commanders involved, eyeball to eyeball, and unless their staffs start working, . . . you don't really solve these . . . things . . . . The lead time [in redeployment planning] was tremendous and we kept pushing for it . . . .[2]

Most of the answers the Marines needed came on 26 January at a conference of staff officers of III MAF, XXIV Corps, the 23d (Americal) Division, and the 196th Light Infantry Brigade.[3] At this conference, the Army representatives confirmed that the 23d Division would extend its TAOI to cover Quang Nam as the Marines left, and that one of the division's three brigades, the 196th, would take over defense of the province. Elements of this brigade, which was operating in Quang Tin, had entered Quang Nam late in 1970 for Operations Tulare Falls I and II. Until late January 1971, an infantry battalion from the brigade with supporting artillery had maneuvered in Antenna Valley west of the 5th Marines' Imperial Lake area.[4]

Under the XXIV Corps/23d Division plan, the 3d MAB would not have to try to protect all of Quang Nam. Instead, the 196th Brigade was to occupy the province in three stages, and the Marines' TAOI would contract as their strength declined. The takeover was scheduled to begin on 13 April, as the Marines completed their Keystone Robin Charlie redeployments and activated the 3d MAB. On that date, the 196th Brigade was to assume responsibility for all of Quang Nam south of the Vu Gia/Song Thu Bon line. Two weeks later, on 1 May, most of the ground combat units of the 3d MAB would stand down, and the 196th Brigade would begin occupying the area west and north of Da Nang. The Marines at the same time would withdraw to a still more restricted TAOI encompassing only Hoa Vang District, which immediately surrounded the city of Da Nang and the airfield. On 7 May, in the third and final phase of the transfer of responsibility, the Army brigade was to take over Hoa Vang and the Da Nang Vital Area. The 3d MAB, all elements of which would have ceased combat operations, then was to complete redeployment preparations protected by the 196th Brigade.

The Army representatives at the conference said that they expected to begin moving headquarters and support elements of the 196th Brigade into cantonments in the Da Nang area, which by about 23 April would

have been wholly or partially vacated by withdrawing Marine units. Decisions on deployment of their battalions in the field would await further study of the tactical situation. The 23d Division would definitely not occupy LZ Baldy or Firebases Ross and Ryder, which therefore would either be turned over to the ARVN or destroyed. Army and Marine representatives agreed on the desirability of early direct consultation between the 1st Marine Division and the 196th Brigade to work out the many details of the transfer of facilities and defense responsibilities. The III MAF G-3, Colonel Charles H. Ludden, who was present at the conference, promptly authorized such contacts by the 1st Marine Division.

Besides preparing to move the 196th Brigade into Quang Nam, XXIV Corps, assisted by III MAF, tried to persuade the 2d ROKMC Brigade to expand its TAOI permanently to include the eastern Que Sons, where the Koreans had previously conducted occasional operations. The Korean commander, Brigadier General Lee Dong Yong, encouraged by General Robertson in "Marine to Marine" consultations, initially responded favorably to this suggestion. Lee's Korean superiors in Saigon, however, were more cautious. Under their instructions Lee eventually agreed to only a modest enlargement of his territory in the lowlands, although his troops continued to make brief forays into the eastern Que Sons.[5]

With the identity of the relieving force and the general schedule for its arrival settled, Major General Widdecke on 4 February proposed a detailed plan to III MAF for the first stage of redeployment plans. The objective was to keep up continuous operations throughout the division TAOI, even as troop strength diminished. Under Widdecke's proposal, the rearrangement of forces was to begin on 13 February, when the 5th Marines would extract its 3d Battalion from Operation Imperial Lake and move it to Hill 34 to prepare for departure. The 11th Marines, at the same time, would begin withdrawing its 2d Battalion, the 5th Marines' direct support artillery unit, from combat. From 13 February to 3 March, the 5th Marines was to defend Baldy and continue Imperial Lake with its 2d Battalion, supported by batteries from the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, which would occupy firebases in the Que Sons. The 5th Marines' regimental headquarters and 2d Battalion were to stand down on or about 3 March. Another infantry unit, to be determined later, would then replace the 2d Battalion in Imperial Lake. On 8 February, after III MAF approved this plan, the division issued orders for its execution.[6]

A week after the division issued this first redeployment order, on 17 February, General Abrams confirmed long-standing Marine expectations that withdrawal of the 3d MAB would follow hard on the heels of its formation. On the 17th, the MACV commander directed his subordinate commands to furnish detailed troop lists for a projected withdrawal of 29,000 men, to be carried out between 1 May and 30 June. This redeployment would be necessary to bring American strength in Vietnam down from the 284,000 men who would be left after completion of Keytsone Robin Charlie to 255,000, the ceiling established by the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the period after 1 July 1971. Abrams set the Marine share of this redeployment at 12,700 men, in effect the entire 3d MAB. Marine plans for the sixth withdrawal increment, therefore, would merge with those for the seventh increment and for Army assumption of the III MAF TAOI.[7]

On 18 February, the Americal Division, in response to orders from XXIV Corps, issued its concept of operations for taking over Quang Nam. Under it, the 196th Brigade, consisting of four infantry battalions, reinforced by an armored cavalry squadron and an air cavalry troop, would start its redeployment northward on 13 April. A battalion each of 105mm and 155mm howitzers and two helicopter companies were to accompany the brigade. On the 13th, one of the Army infantry battalions, with supporting artillery, would begin operations at Hill 510 in the Que Sons. Ten days later, rear elements of the infantry battalions, artillery and support units, and the brigade headquarters were to occupy the cantonments of the 1st and 11th Marines, the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, and other Marine organizations on Division Ridge. The helicopter companies and the air cavalry troop would establish themselves at Marble Mountain. Combat elements of the other three infantry battalions and the armored cavalry squadron were to enter Quang Nam on or about 1 May. The cavalry was to deploy in the Arizona Territory northwest of An Hoa. One of the infantry battalions would be located on Charlie Ridge, while the other two began operations deep in the mountains west and northwest of Da Nang.[8]

The 196th Brigade's tactical plans departed drastically from the Marines' defense system, with its elaborate network of permanent base camps, firebases, and observation posts and its emphasis on saturation patrolling of the Rocket Belt and the populated lowlands. Indeed, the Army planners showed little interest in the Marines' system and appeared to doubt its effectiveness. According to Lieutenant General

Robertson, the Army staff officers "couldn't quite visualize how the rockets would every now and then fall in Da Nang airfield [with] the Marines patrolling . . . the way they had used to . . . ."[9]

The Army brigade, therefore, founded its tactical plan on "a mobile concept with no fixed fire support bases." Essentially this meant garrisoning permanently only the cluster of rear installations behind Division Ridge and Hill 65, which would serve as an artillery position, and leaving most patrolling of the Rocket Belt to the South Vietnamese. The Army infantry and armored cavalry, instead of relieving the Marines in place, were to deploy deep in the mountains and the Arizona Territory, outside the usual III MAF AOs. There, the Army troops would conduct continuous search and destroy operations aimed at intercepting enemy forces well away from Da Nang. Marines familiar with the defense problems in Quang Nam had private doubts about the validity of this strategy, but they could not dictate another Service's methods of operation.[10]

Operations in Quang Nam, January-February 1971

The pattern of war in Quang Nam showed little change during the first months of 1971. III MAF now estimated total North Vietnamese and Viet Cong strength in the province at about 13,900 men; the 1st Marine Division estimate was lower, about 9,000 effectives. Whatever the Communists' actual numbers, all allied intelligence agencies agreed that combat losses, combined with a reduced flow of replacements from North Vietnam and local recruiting difficulties, were reducing enemy forces in both quantity and quality. Casualties among military leaders and VCI had disrupted enemy command and control. The autumn floods and storms had destroyed many cached supplies and resulted in the deaths of perhaps 1,000 NVA and VC from hunger and exposure. Prisoners and *Hoi Chanhs* continued to report deteriorating morale, and even occasional mass refusals to fight, among both main forces and guerrillas.[11]

Nevertheless, as Colonel Edward A. Timmes, the 1st Marine Division Assistant G-2, pointed out, the enemy still constituted:

> . . . a force in being . . . that not only can give us contacts but more important . . . can make influence upon our population. For example, if [the enemy] throws three rockets once a month, and they do not even hit the airfield, it still achieves his purpose. He has let everybody know, within sight and sound, or even where they see the Marines running around because of this . . . that he can still make these attacks. Whether successful or not, he still achieves a large portion of his goal . . . .[12]

Communist tactics during early 1971 conformed to Colonel Timmes' expectations. Avoiding Marine units, the enemy concentrated on harassment of ARVN, RF, and PF positions by occasional attacks by fire and small ground assaults and maintained steady terrorist pressure on GVN officials and civilians through terrorism.

As in previous years, enemy offensive activity usually occurred during three-to-six-day "high points" coinciding with periods of moonless nights. Most of these upsurges of aggressiveness during the first weeks of 1971 were part of the enemy's K-800 Spring Offensive. Throughout January, the allies detected increasing infiltration of small NVA and VC main force detachments into the lowlands from mountain base areas. Increased infiltration was normally a harbinger of intensified Communist activity generally characterized by attacks by fire with limited ground follow-up. From the night of 31 January to 1 February, the expected offensive began with a series of nearly simultaneous mortar and ground attacks on CUPP and militia units. The enemy also fired eight 122mm rockets at Da Nang airfield. Three of the rockets failed to explode; the others set fire to a 50,000-gallon fuel dump, slightly damaged two Marine KC-130s, killed a Vietnamese woman, and wounded two U.S. Navy men. The KC-130s, which were parked near the blazing fuel tanks, would have been destroyed except for the courage of five enlisted Marines from Sub-Unit 1 of Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 152 and MABS-11. These Marines braved intense heat and danger of explosions to tow the big planes to safety.[13]

The K-800 Campaign continued through February with flurries of small-scale attacks. On 21 February, the enemy hit Da Nang with eight more 122mm rockets which destroyed a C-130 transport. The same night, seven more rockets landed on Hill 55, wounding one Marine. Four more rockets struck the hill three days later, but exploded harmlessly outside the perimeter. After a month of activity, the results of the K-800 Campiagn in allied casualties and material losses were minor compared to the scale and cost of the NVA and VC effort. Nevertheless, the III MAF intelligence section reported that the offensive "was successful in that the enemy was able to demonstrate his continued presence to the civilian population despite allied deterrent operations."[14]

Deterrent operations were continuous and extensive. Throughout January and February, the South

Vietnamese regulats, RFs, and PFs in Quang Nam, supported by III MAF and South Korean Marines, attempted to forestall enemy attacks by attacks of their own and to continue wearing down Communist military and political strength. The ARVN 1st Task Force on 19 January ended its Operation Hoang Dieu 101, a province-wide campaign of saturation patrolling in the lowlands that had begun on 17 December. In the month-long effort, the South Vietnamese and cooperating U.S. and Korean Marine units claimed to have killed 538 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong and to have captured 87 prisoners and 171 weapons. Another 45 enemy had surrendered under the *Chieu Hoi* program. After a pause during the Tet holidays, the 1st Task Force on 3 February initiated Operation Hoang Dieu 103, again emphasizing continuous patrols and ambushes around populated areas to block infiltration and kill or capture guerrillas and members of the VCI. This effort involved most of the province RFs and PFs, while the 51st ARVN Regiment, the principal infantry element of the 1st Task Force, deployed its four battalions around Hill 55 and An Hoa.[15]

Around Hoi An, the Republic of Korea 2d Marine Brigade maintained security within its own TAOI. The brigade, expanding on the effort begun late in the previous year, also conducted Operation Golden Dragon II in the northeastern Que Sons from 4-21 January. During this period, elements from four infantry battalions and a reconnaissance unit searched and patrolled a sector of the mountains. The Koreans had little contact, reporting only one enemy killed and four weapons captured.[16]

Units of the 1st Marine Division continued to patrol the Rocket Belt and to sweep the enemy base areas in the Que Son Mountains. To disrupt enemy preparations for an offensive, the division, in cooperation with the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, conducted a series of air and artillery attacks on Base Area 112 in the mountains west of An Hoa. Aircraft of the wing and 175mm guns of the division poured tons of bombs and napalm and hundreds of artillery rounds on suspected headquarters, base camps, and supply caches. On the basis of aerial photography and observation of damage, targets were either struck again or removed from the list as unprofitable and replaced by others. By this continuing effort, Marine commanders hoped to prevent enemy use of the base area without committing allied ground forces.[17]

Colonel Paul X. Kelley's 1st Marines continued its defense of the approaches to Da Nang, with the 3d Battalion coveting the area north and northwest of the city, the 1st Battalion blocking the infiltration routes from Charlie Ridge and guarding the Thuong Duc corridor, and the 2d Battalion patrolling the Viet Cong-infested countryside south of Da Nang. Company M of the regiment carried on the Combined Unit Pacification Program in hamlets throughout the 1st Marines' TAOI.

Marine Corps Historical Collection

A Marine cautiously crosses a makeshift bridge near Charlie Ridge in Upshur Stream. This was one of the last of extended Marine operations in Vietnam.

Each battalion continued the now well-established regimen of constant day and night patrols and ambushes and cordon and search operations, and conducted occasional company or battalion-size maneuvers. Enemy activity in the regiment's area of responsibility increased slightly as the K-800 Campaign began, but combat remained small-scale and sporadic. Most of the enemy encountered by Kelley's

Marines were local Viet Cong or members of the infrastructure. As had been true for the past year, mines and boobytraps caused a large proportion of the regiment's casualties, although the Marines now were finding and disarming a monthly average of 75 percent of the mines they encountered.[18]

On 3 January, the 1st Marines reorganized its Quick Reaction Force (QRF). A regimental order of that date required each battalion, in rotation, to furnish one rifle company to serve, usually for 15 days, as the 1st Marines' QRF. One platoon of the QRF company, under operational control of the regiment, would be billetted at the 1st Marines' CP on Division Ridge ready for deployment by helicopter anywhere in the regimental TAOI on 15 minutes notice. The rest of the company was to be prepared to reinforce the QRF platoon by helicopter within one hour of an alert. An aircraft package for the QRF of one UH-1E, three CH-46s, and two AH-1Gs would stand by at Marble Mountain. The principal mission of the QRF was to reinforce reconnaissance units and exploit intelligence reports.[19]

During January, the 1st Marines employed its QRF four times, twice in response to current information, once to protect a downed Army helicopter, and once to assist a reconnaissance team engaging the enemy. The following month, the quick reaction platoon twice worked with infantry companies in surprise sweeps and searches of suspected enemy headquarters and base areas. None of these reactions resulted in significant contact.[20]

In mid-January, in response to reports of the enemy buildup for the K-800 Campaign, the 1st Marines intensified efforts to prevent rocket launchings against Da Nang. On 13 January, and again after the offensive had begun, on 8 and 22 February, the regiment directed its battalions to concentrate patrolling on previously used rocket launching sites and frequently travelled infiltration routes from Charlie Ridge toward the lowlands. Early in February, the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines was temporarily reinforced by Companies A and C of the 5th Marines for antirocket activities. The 1st MAW increased aerial surveillance of the Rocket Belt, and the 11th Marines redeployed its Integrated Observation Devices (IODs) for better coverage of potential enemy firing positions.[21]

Supplementing these regular antirocket measures, the 1st Marines began a preemptive search and destroy operation on western Charlie Ridge. In this operation, patterned on Imperial Lake, the 1st Marines employed continuous reconnaissance and infantry patrolling and concentrated air and artillery attacks in an effort to locate elements of the *575th NVA Artillery/Rocket Battalion* and to prevent the NVA and VC from using the Charlie Ridge base area to prepare for attacks against Da Nang.

The operation, codenamed Upshur Stream, began on 11 January under the control of Lieutenant Colonel Robert P. Rose's 1st Battalion, 1st Marines. On the 11th, a platoon of Company D was inserted by helicopter on Hill 383, about five miles northeast of Thuong Duc. The platoon secured the hill as a patrol base for teams from the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion which were searching the surrounding rough, jungle-covered terrain. Two days later, at 1300, a 1st Battalion command group, with Company B of the 1st Battalion, landed from helicopters on Hill 383. The infantry took over the search of the area, relieving the reconnaissance teams. On the 15th, two 4.2-inch mortars and crews from the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines were lifted to Hill 383 by helicopter to furnish fire support. The Marines systematically patrolled the hills until 23 January. They found a few abandoned base camps and small caches of weapons, ammunition, food, and equipment. Many of the weapons they captured were rusty and long-unused. The Marines found no major rocket storage areas or enemy troops.

Most of the Marine casualties in the operation occurred on 20 and 21 January. As a platoon of Company B was patrolling about two miles west of Hill 383 on the 20th, the point man set off a boobytrap made from a can filled with C-4 explosive. The blast injured four Marines. A second C-4 can boobytrap blew up as the platoon was securing a landing zone for a medical evacuation helicopter wounding another four men. The helicopter arrived to pick up the casualties, and as it settled into the landing zone, its rotor wash detonated four additional mines and wounded three more Marines. Company B's misfortunes culminated the next day, when a CH-46D from HMM-463 crashed and burned while landing at the company's position. Four Marines, a Navy corpsman, and a Kit Carson Scout died in the wreck; 16 other Marines were injured, 10 seriously.[22]

On 20 January, the division ordered the 1st Marines to extend Upshur Stream indefinitely as a combined reconnaissance-artillery-infantry campaign. The new phase of the operation began with a concentrated artillery attack by the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines. On the 21st, four self-propelled 155mm howitzers of the

battalion moved from the Northern Artillery Cantonment to Hill 65, and two 105mm howitzers were lifted by helicopter to Hill 270. Just after midnight on the morning of the 22d, these weapons, supported by Battery A, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines also on Hill 65, and by a platoon of the 3d 8-inch Howitzer Battery on Hill 10 opened fire. Their target was an area of suspected enemy base camps and rocket and supply caches about three miles north of Hill 383.

During the artillery attack on 23 January, the 1st Battalion command group, the two infantry companies, and the mortar detachment left Hill 383 by helicopter. One infantry platoon stayed behind on the hill to protect a patrol base for reconnaissance teams, which resumed patrolling of the mountains. The artillery attack went on until 20 February, saturating the target area with 15,620 155mm, 105mm, and 8-inch rounds. After the bombardment ended, Upshur Stream continued primarily as a reconnaissance effort around Hill 383 and also in the area which had been worked over by the artillery. By the end of February, 15 teams from the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion had participated in the operation, with an average of three deployed on Charlie Ridge at one time. The reconnaissance Marines had killed one enemy, wounded two, and directed artillery fire which killed two more, but they had made no contacts or discoveries large enough to justify recommitting the infantry or the QRF[23] Marine units had detained 30 suspects and captured 31 weapons by 28 February. With prevailing contacts scant and of limited size, and because recon teams continued to produce little evidence of enemy whereabouts, Operation Upshur Stream was concluded on 29 March.

Marines of Company E, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines probe a ridgeline in the Que Son Mountains southwest of Da Nang in Operation Imperial Lake.
Department of the Defense Photo (USMC) A373775

On 29 January, as Operation Lam Son 719 began, the 1st Marines was assigned responsibility for guarding Route 1 where the highway, the only land route between the U.S. Army Support Command at Da Nang and northern MR 1, twists through Hai Van Pass. The TAOI of Lieutenant Colonel Marc A. Moore's 3d Battalion included the pass. Moore deployed his Company K, just back from Upshur Stream, to reinforce the Regional Force troops along the highway. The company placed Marines in static defense positions at bridges and culverts and cooperated with Regional Force units by patrolling the hills overlooking the road. On 2, 3, and 4 February, 20 or 30 NVA and VC, often taking advantage of fog and low clouds for protection against allied air support, harassed Marine positions and passing convoys through attacks by fire. The Marines returned fire and, when the weather permitted, called in helicopter gunships. One Company K Marine was seriously wounded in these skirmishes. Sweeping Marines and RFs found no Communist dead or weapons.

In mid-February, Company L of Moore's battalion relieved Company K. On 21 and 22 February, this company, too, came under attack by small enemy groups. During the morning of the 26th, five-10 Communists managed to fire RPGs and small arms at a northbound Army convoy, disabling a jeep and a five-ton tractor and setting a truck on fire. The 3d Platoon of Company L and soldiers from the convoy drove off the NVA and VC with no casualties to either side.[24]

During January and February the 5th Marines continued to sweep the Que Son Mountains during Operation Imperial Lake. They also protected the hamlets and villages around LZ Baldy and FSB Ross. The 2d Battalion, based at Baldy, and the 3d Battalion, oper-

ating from Ross, each deployed a forward command group and an average of two companies at a time in the Que Sons. The remaining companies of these battalions patrolled and ambushed in the lowlands. Still under operational control of the division, the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines rotated its companies between Imperial Lake and defense of Division Ridge.

Late in January, the Communists' K-800 Campaign intruded in the 5th Marines' AO in the form of more frequent small-scale ground probes and attacks by fire. The enemy, following their usual sttategy, concentrated on Regional and Popular Force outposts, CUPP units, bridges, refugee settlements, and district towns. They seemed to be massing strength in the lowlands, and intelligence reports indicated that main force and North Vietnamese soldiers were reinforcing local guerrilla units. On the other hand, the number of enemy in the Que Son Mountains declined. The elusive *Front 4 Forward Headquarters*, long hunted by the Marines in Imperial Lake, showed no signs of activity. Most units controlled by *Front 4* had moved either into the lowlands or to other base areas in the hills farther west.[25]

Imperial Lake continued to involve the largest portion of the 5th Marines' strength. At the beginning of January, all three of the regiment's battalions had command groups and infantry companies deployed in the Que Sons. On 8 January, the 1st Battalion, on orders from the division, withdrew its forward command group and one of its two companies in Imperial Lake to Hill 34, leaving one company in the Que Sons under the operational control of the 2d Battalion. From then until the end of February, the 1st Battalion rotated its companies, one at a time, in and out of Imperial Lake.[26]

The partial withdrawal of the 1st Battalion left five infantry companies with two battalion command groups to carry on the operation. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas M. Hamlin's 2d Battalion, with two of its own companies and one from the 1st Battalion, operated around Hill 510, about five miles northwest of Firebase Ross. Three miles east of Hamlin's CP on Hill 510, the 3d Battalion, under Lieutenant Colonel Herschel L. Johnson, Jr., deployed two companies around Hill 381. West and southwest of the infantry, six or seven teams from the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, continually patrolled the more remote parts of the Que Sons. This deployment of troops continued until 13 February. Then, beginning the 1st Marine Division redeployment plan, the 2d Battalion command group relieved that of the 3d on Hill 381 and took charge of the operation, initially with Companies K and L of the 3d Battalion attached. Two days later, Companies K and L left for Hill 34, their battalion's stand-down point. The 2d Battalion, with two of its own companies and one from the 1st Battalion, continued Operation Imperial Lake for the rest of the month. At the same time that the 3d Battalion withdrew from Imperial Lake, the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines moved four 105mm howitzers, two 155mm howitzers, and six 107mm mortars into the Que Sons. These artillery elements replaced batteries of the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines which were standing down.[27]

Marines patrolling the Que Sons continued to have brief firefights with groups, usually of six or fewer North Vietnamese and Viet Cong. The largest contact of early 1971 occurred on the afternoon of 25 January. Marines of the 2d Platoon of Company L, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, searching an area two and one-half miles northeast of FSB Ross, heard voices and movement south of their position. A squad sent to investigate spotted 10 enemy soldiers walking toward them along a trail. The Marines caught the NVA and VC off guard and killed nine of them while suffering no casualties themselves. The 2d Platoon Marines also captured an AK-47, a 9mm pistol, a North Vietnamese flag, and an assortment of abandoned equipment and supplies, including about a pound of marijuana. As they swept the area of the fight, the Marines came under small arms fire, and when they returned to the scene of the initial contact, they found that five of the dead North Vietnamese had been dragged away.[28]

Marine patrols combing the hills continued to uncover enemy cave complexes. They usually blew the caves up or contaminated them with crystallized CS riot gas. The Marines found caches of enemy supplies and weapons and encountered scattered enemy. During January, for example, Company H of the 2d Battalion, besides killing three Communists, ferreted out and captured over 10,000 rounds of .50-caliber and 7.62mm ammunition, 495 pounds of food, and 1 crew-served and 3 individual weapons.[29] Other companies on the operation made similar finds. In the first two months of 1971, 1st Marine Division units involved in Imperial Lake accounted for 85 enemy dead and captured 41 weapons. Marine casualties amounted to one killed and 37 wounded. More important than the number of NVA and VC casualties produced was the persistent disruption of this strategic Communist base

area. In the words of Major General Widdecke, Marine saturation patrolling "effectively restricts enemy movement through the Que Son M[ountains] and denies them access to the D[a Nang] V[ital] A[rea] and adjacent lowlands."[30]

In spite of the emphasis placed on Imperial Lake, the 5th Marines' CUPP unit, Company G under Captain Robert O. Tilley, did more fighting and inflicted more casualties during January and February than any other unit of the regiment. The company's activities were concentrated in the area from LZ Baldy to the Ba Ren River and west to Phu Loc Valley, a vital and much used enemy line of communication which connected the Nui Loc Son sector with the Hoi An, An Hoa, and Da Nang areas. Much of the action resulted from the aggressiveness of the new South Vietnamese commander of the 1/20 Regional Force Group. This officer controlled the activities of the RF and PF in the Moc Bai Subsector, which encompassed that portion of Que Son District northwest of Baldy, including the stretch of Route 1 between Baldy and the Ba Ren bridge. In January, the RF commander began pushing his units, including those attached to the CUPPs, into previously abandoned or currently Viet Cong-dominated hamlets. The Viet Cong reacted strongly with over 40 sharp actions, most of them at night.

Much of the pressure fell on CUPP 6, a Marine squad from Company G paired with the 197th Popular Force Platoon. In January, CUPP 6 moved into the strongly pro-VC Phu Huong village about two miles northwest of Baldy. Phu Huong is just to the southwest of Phu Thanh, which had been brutally attacked by the VC in June of the previous year. During the month of January, CUPP 6 reported 28 incidents in its area of operations, including half a dozen major fire fights. In the largest of these, during the night of 11-12 January, a patrol of Marines and PFs spotted about 20 Viet Cong waiting in ambush and quickly took defensive positions. Four VC advanced to probe the CUPP's line. The Marines and PFs fired, killing two. For two and one-half hours, the CUPP unit battled the enemy. As the fight expanded, the Marines called in a "Black Hammer" night helicopter patrol, and with the support of the helicopters' firepower, routed the VC, who left 16 dead behind, nine of them killed by the helicopters. The CUPP unit had only one slightly wounded Marine.

In many of its night actions, Company G received support from the Black Hammer patrols of Lieutenant Colonel Richard J. Blanc's HML-167. The squadron had developed this patrol during the previous year under the codename Night Hawk. It consisted of a UH-1E search aircraft equipped with a machine gun, a night observation device (NOD), and a 50,000,000 candlepower Xenon searchlight, accompanied by two armed UH-1Es. Flying over the countryside at night, the search plane could spot the enemy with its NOD and then illuminate them for the gunships with its powerful searchlight. In January, HML-167 renamed this package Black Hammer and began to coordinate it more closely with the infantry, especially the CUPP Company, which did so much of its fighting at night. When supporting the CUPP, the Black Hammer provided not only fire power, but also airborne command and control. Captain Tilley, the company commander, usually rode in one of the helicopters, directing the maneuvers of his ground units from his airborne observation post.[31]

CUPP 6 again had sizeable firefights on 19, 22, 24, 27, and 28 January in which the unit and the Black Hammer aircraft killed 36 more VC. The CUPP suffered only minor casaulties. Other CUPPs also ambushed small groups of enemy or fought off probing attacks on their hamlets. By the end of the month, Company G and its RF and PF allies had accounted for more than 60 enemy dead, taken two prisoners, received 10 *Hoi Chanhs*, and captured 2,900 pounds of tice and seven weapons. Company G's losses amounted to two Marines killed and 26 wounded and one RF and 16 PF soldiers wounded.[32]

With the increase in contacts, the 5th Marines sent regular infantry to reinforce its CUPP company. On 22 January, the 2d Platoon of Company H moved from Baldy to the Ba Ren bridge, where it assisted the militia in protecting the span. The platoon was placed under the operational control of Company G. From 29-31 January, the opening days of the VC K-800 offensive, the 1st and 3d Platoons of Company H also reinforced CUPP units in exposed areas.[33]

During the first part of February, the regiment sent a platoon of Company F to assist three CUPPs, including the embattled Team 6. As the month progressed, however, enemy pressure on the CUPPs eased significantly, even though the Moc Bai Subsector Regional and Popular Forces continued to push into enemy-dominated areas north and west of LZ Baldy. Occasional night action still flared up, however, and Company G used Black Hammer support seven times in February. To counter the new allied pacification drive,

the enemy launched two terrorist attacks on Xuan Phuoc village, just off Route 535 southwest of Baldy. In two invasions of the village, the VC burned 39 huts and killed two civilians. After the second attack, Company C deployed a reinforced squad for several nights in ambush along the main Viet Cong avenues of approach to the village. The ambushes produced no contact, but the enemy attacks on Xuan Phuoc stopped. In spite of these outbreaks, Captain Tilley's Marines were able to resume intensive training of their PF counterparts during February, while devoting more time to civic action.[34]

Late in January, the 5th Marines used its Quick Reaction Force to revive the Kingfisher tactic employed so successfully by the 1st Marines the year before. Under the codename Green Anvil, the 5th Marines began sending a reinforced squad from its QRF company, in two CH-46Ds, on airborne patrol over the regimental TAOI. A UH-1E command aircraft would fly ahead of the transports searching for targets, and two AH-1G Cobras would escort the CH-46s. If the command helicopter sighted enemy, the infantry squad could land within minutes, supported by the gunships. The Green Anvil patrols, like those of the 1st Marines' Kingfisher, usually concentrated on areas which intelligence sources singled out as enemy LOCs or assembly points.

In two operations in the last weeks of January, Green Anvil units killed four VC/NVA and captured five prisoners and two weapons. During the following month, the airborne patrols, drawn from Companies E and F of the 2d Battalion, made eight landings, most of which produced significant contact. The largest of these Green Anvil actions began at 1830 on 24 February, just south of the Ba Ren River and northeast of Phu Thanh. At that time, the command "Huey" of a patrol spotted a cluster of three bunkers with packs and weapons laying around them. The infantry squad,

Marines of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines in the Que Son Mountains strip and clean their rifles during a quiet period in the war. Note the .50-caliber machine gun position and flag on the rock above them. Their live-in bunker behind them is made of empty crates.

Department of the Defense Photo (USMC) A373806

from the 1st Platoon of Company E, landed to sweep the area. As they came out of their helicopters, the Marines were met by small arms fire and grenades. They returned fire, and the enemy fled, pursued by the Cobras. In the running fight which followed, two Marines were seriously wounded, but the squad and the Cobras killed a total of 15 enemy, and the infantry took two prisoners and captured two weapons and 12 pounds of Communist documents. By the end of February, Green Anvil operations had accounted for 35 enemy dead, 5 prisoners, 11 weapons, and 6,000 pounds of rice captured, along with an assortment of documents and equipment.[35]

During January and February, 1st Division Marines and their supporting aircraft, fixed-wing and helicopters, had killed over 375 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong and captured 25 more and 172 weapons. While contacts with the enemy were only slightly increased during January and February over the last few months of 1970, the VC/NVA losses to Marines in January alone were the highest since the preceding August. Marine casualties in the same period amounted to 11 dead and 202 wounded.[36] For over 12,400 Marines of III MAF, these had been the last two months of Vietnam combat. Redeployment of the units scheduled for Keystone Robin Charlie was well under way by the end of February.

Keystone Robin Charlie Begins

Preparation for Keystone Robin Charlie began on 13 January, with the standing down of Marine Air Control Squadron (MACS) 4. Personnel and equipment from this squadron sailed from Da Nang on 1 February on board the amphibious ships of the first of 12 planned embarkation units. The ships also carried aircraft and extra equipment of other redeploying organizations.

Redeployment activity speeded up in mid-February. While no ground combat units actually redeployed during January and February, by the 15th of the month, the 3d Battalion of the 5th Marines, along with the combat support units, Batteries D and F of the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, and Battery K of the 4th Battalion, 11th Marines, had ended combat operations. Thirteen days later, the 1st Engineer Battalion (-) also stood down. Units of the 1st MAW also began readying for departure. HMM-364 flew its last mission on 16 February; by the end of the month, its men and aircraft were on their way to the United States. On 22 February, VMFA-115 ceased operations.[37]

Departure plans for four other major 1st MAW units assigned to Keystone Robin Charlie were abruptly cancelled. Lieutenant General Sutherland obtained permission from MACV for HMH-463, which was playing such a crucial role in supporting operation Lam Son 719, to postpone its departure until Increment Seven. Later, on 23 February, Sutherland requested authorization to retain two other helicopter squadrons, HML-167 and HMM-263, declaring that XXIV Corps needed these additional helicopters to meet other aviation requirements in MR 1. Sutherland also asked to keep MASS-3 (-), which provided the air support radar teams at Khe Sanh, FSB Birmingham, and Da Nang. MACV approved all these requests and postponed withdrawal of the affected units until the next redeployment. To maintain these squadrons during their extended time in Vietnam, 1st MAW obtained permission to reduce the size of the detachments being withdrawn from its headquarters and support units. These changes diminished the Marines' share of Keystone Robin Charlie by a total of 821 men. The retained Marines would be replaced in the redeployment by men from other Services and would go out later with the 3d MAB.[38]

Ground operations in Quang Nam increasingly centered on the complicated rearrangements necessary to cover the Que Sons while extracting the 5th Marines from combat. As planned, the redeploying regiment's 3d Battalion displaced its forward command post on 13 February from Hill 381 back to Firebase Ross. Two rifle companies, K and L, stayed in the field for two more days, attached to the 2d Battalion. On the 13th the 3d Battalion resumed control from the 11th Marines of Company M, which had been garrisoning FSB Ryder, west of Ross, and Observation Post Roundup, south of the base.

On 15 February, the 3d Battalion formally turned FSB Ross over to the South Vietnamese 411th Regional Force Company. The battalion Headquarters and Service Company, Companies I, K, and L, and part of Company M moved the same day to Hill 34, where the battalion was to stage while preparing to redeploy. Elements of Company M remained at Roundup and Ryder for another day to protect engineer detachments that were levelling the two installations, neither of which the U.S. Army nor the RVNAF wished to occupy. Marines from Company F, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines took over this security mission on the 16th, and the rest of Company M left by helicopter for Hill 34.[39]

Extensive artillery rearrangements accompanied the

beginning of the 5th Marines' withdrawal. In anticipation of the closing down of Firebases Ross and Ryder and of the removal from combat of the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines received the mission of establishing batteries in the Que Sons to support the continuation of Imperial Lake. On 9 February, Lieutenant Colonel Ogden and members of his staff made an aerial reconnaissance of the mountains and selected Hills 510, 425, 381, and 218 as battery positions. All these locations had been occupied frequently during the long campaign in the Que Sons.

Movement of the batteries from the 1st Marines' TAOI began on the 12th, when four 105mm howitzers from Battery C and two 155mm howitzers, which had been attached to the 1st Battalion Headquarters Battery, moved by road from the Northern Artillery Cantonment to LZ Baldy. From Baldy, helicopters flew the 105s and their crews to Hill 510, the main reconnaissance patrol base in the western Que Sons, and the 155s, designated Platoon "CX", to Hill 218 about a mile north of Ross. The following day, a detachment of four mortar crews and tubes from the 1st Battalion's Mortar Battery displaced by helicopter from Camp Lauer near Marble Mountain to Hill 381, the command post of the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines. These units, under the operational control of the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, took over the fire support tasks of Battery F of the 2d Battalion, which stood down at FSB Ryder on the 13th, and Batteries D of the 2d Battalion and K of the 4th Battalion, 11th Marines, which stood down at Ross on the 14th and 15th. Completing the removal of artillery from Ross, Battery D, 1st Battalion, 82d Artillery, U.S. Army, which had been a tenant unit at the Marine firebase, moved to Hill 65 on 15 February. There, Battery B, whose parent battalion was one of the support units of the 196th Brigade, was to conduct fire missions under operational control of the 11th Marines until possession of Hill 65 passed to the Army.

On 22 February, the two remaining 107mm mortars and crews of the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines were ferried by helicopter from Hill 270, west of Da Nang, to Hill 425 in the northern Que Sons. This mortar detachment relieved elements of the mortar battery of the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, which was standing down. That same day, the 1st Battalion established a forward command post, consisting of its S-3 officer, fire direction center, and a logistical detachment, at Hill 34, to shorten lines of communication to the units in the Que Sons.[40]

As the troops and artillery evacuated Firebases Ross and Ryder and Observation Post Roundup, Marine engineers demolished those installations not taken over by other allied units. Ross, occupied by South Vietnamese forces, remained intact. At Roundup and Ryder the engineers, with Marines from Company F, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines as security, levelled bunkers, filled in trenches and fighting holes, and removed or destroyed all equipment, even the trash. By 26 February, both bases had been reduced to bare hilltops.[41]

Early in March, the 5th Marines, following plans completed by the 1st Marine Division during late February, withdrew its 2d Battalion and regimental headquarters from operations. The 1st Marines then assumed responsibility for the entire division TAOI and continued Operation Imperial Lake. For these tasks, Colonel Kelley's regiment was reinforced by the last remaining active element of the 5th Marines, Lieutenant Colonel Franklin A. Hart, Jr.,'s 1st Battalion.

On 1 March, the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines pulled its forward CP back from Hill 381 to LZ Baldy. Companies F and H of the battalion continued patrolling in the Que Sons until the 3d, when they, too, joined the battalion headquarters and Company E at Baldy. Company G by the 3d had withdrawn from CUPP activity and reassembled at Baldy as a conventional rifle company.* During the next two days, the entire battalion and the 5th Marines' regimental Headquarters moved from Baldy to Hill 34 to prepare for embarkation.[42]

The 1st Marines took operational control of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, on 2 March. This battalion at once deployed a forward command post, with its own Company B and attached Company E, 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, to Hill 510. These units were to conduct Operation Imperial Lake. Company D of Hart's battalion moved to Baldy on the 2d to guard the big base until the South Vietnamese, to whom it was being transferred, could bring in troops to defend it. The remaining two companies of the 1st Battalion protected Division Ridge. On 3 March, with these troop movements completed, the 1st Marines formally enlarged its TAOI to incorporate that of the 5th Marines.[43]

On the 3d, also, Headquarters Battery, 2d Battalion, 11th Marines stood down, and the 1st Battalion of the artillery regiment took operational control of

*The Combined Unit Pacification Program officially ended in April when the four remaining teams of Company M, 3d Battalion, 1st Marines were finally removed from the program.

Department of the Defense Photo (USMC) A373954

A Marine from Headquarters Battery, 11th Marines sits on an improvised bench in a well-emplaced, sandbagged .50-caliber machine gun position on Hill 218 providing a panoramic view of the Que Son Mountains, the Que Son Valley, and the possible enemy.

the batteries located in the former 5th Marines TAOI. The 1st Battalion began consolidating and reducing the artillery support for Imperial Lake. On 6 March, helicopters lifted the two 155mm howitzers from Hill 218 to Hill 510, the position of the 105mm howitzers. The four mortars from Hill 381, which had been displaced to Baldy on the 2d, shifted to Camp Lauer on 11 March as the Americans started evacuating Baldy.[44]

From 2-23 March, the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines maintained the offensive in the Que Sons. Maneuvering northeast of Hill 510, the two infantry companies spread out in squad patrols to search assigned areas. Reconnaissance teams continued to patrol, search, and ambush west of Hill 510. On 11 March, two platoons of Company D replaced Company E of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines in the field. Company E (-) then returned to its parent unit, leaving one platoon to assist a platoon from Company D in guarding Baldy. The Imperial Lake units uncovered a number of base camps and killed six Communists in brief firefights. They also captured the usual haul of miscellaneous weapons, ammunition, equipment, food, and documents. The Marine companies suffered only one man killed by a boobytrap.[45]

On 19 March, the 1st Marines issued orders for the next phase of the redeployment of ground forces: relief of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines in the Que Sons by elements of one of the 1st Marines' battalions and repositioning of the others within the Rocket Belt. The two platoons at Baldy at last turned defense of the base over to the South Vietnamese on 20 March and returned to their parent unit. That same day, the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, under Lieutenant Colonel Roy E. Moss, who had relieved Lieutenant Colonel Donald J. Norris on 7 March, began moving its headquarters from Camp Lauer, which was to be turned over to the ARVN, to Hill 34. Moss repositioned his rifle companies to protect Division Ridge, and his battalion's sector of the Rocket Belt, and he organized an additional provisional rifle company from headquarters and support troops to strengthen the defense of the ridge with its many Marine, U.S. Army, and South Vietnamese installations.* The 2d Battalion had completed its shift of forces by the 24th, when Lieutenant Colonel Moss assumed the additional duty of defense coordinator for Division Ridge.

On 23 March, the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines withdrew its forward command post and two rifle companies from Hill 510 and under the protection of 2d

*As defense coordinator, Moss, besides providing forces from his own battalion, directed the close-in self-defense of the units and installations within the battalion TAOI. These included the 1st Marine Division Headquarters; ARVN 1st Mobile Brigade Task Force Headquarters; the 44th ARVN Artillery; the Hoa Cam Territorial Forces Training Center; the III MAF Freedom Hill Recreation Center; the 1st and 11th Marines Headquarters; the U.S. Army's 504th Military Police Battalion, 522d Replacement Battalion, and 478th Aviation Company; MASS-3; Ammunition Supply Point (ASP) 1; the 1st Motor Transport Battalion; 1st Medical Battalion; and 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, which was standing down.

Battalion, 1st Marines, stood down at Hill 34. That same day, a forward command group from Lieutenant Colonel Marc A. Moore's 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, with Companies K and L, took up positions on Hill 510 to carry on Operation Imperial Lake. Company I of the 3d Battalion, with Company M (-), which had returned from CUPP duty to its parent battalion on the 20th, continued to guard Hai Van Pass and the area northwest of Da Nang. The 1st Battalion maintained its positions in the Thuong Duc corridor and deployed platoons on Charlie Ridge to support reconnaissance teams in Operation Upshur Stream.[46]

On 23-24 March, the headquarters of the 11th Marines stood down. The artillery regiment transferred control of all the batteries remaining in Quang Nam, as well as its aerial observer section, observation posts, and IOD sites to its 1st Battalion, which was to form the 3d MAB's artillery element. At the end of March, the 1st Battalion had three 105mm howitzer batteries under its command: Battery A on Hill 65; B on Hill 55; and C on Hill 510. A detachment of two howitzers from Battery C was located on Hill 270. The battalion's mortar battery had withdrawn from Camp Lauer on the 22d and now was concentrated at the Northern Artillery Cantonment (NAC). The 3d 8-inch Howitzer Battery had two platoons stationed at the Northern Artillery Cantonment and one on Hill 55. Batteries A, B, and C each had been reinforced with two 155mm howitzers,* and a provisional Battery Z had been formed at the NAC with four 105mm howitzers and crews from Batteries A and B, as well as two additional 155s. On Hill 65, Battery D, 1st Battalion, 82d U.S. Artillery also passed under the operational control of the Marine artillery battalion.[47]

During March, the flow of departing units became a flood. By the end of the month, the headquarters and 2d and 3d Battalions of the 5th Marines had left Da Nang for Camp Pendleton, and the 1st Battalion was completing preparations to embark. For the 5th Marines, elements of which had first arrived in Vietnam in March 1966, redeployment ended five years of combat. Units of the regiment had participated in over 50 major operations in I Corps/Military Region 1, including Union I and II, Mameluke Thrust, Meade River, and Imperial Lake in Quang Nam. In Operation Union I and II alone, the 5th Marines had inflicted over 3,000 casualties on the enemy, eliminating the *2d NVA Division* as an effective fighting force. Although the regiment operated almost exclusively in Quang Nam during its last few years of participation in the war, the 5th Marines had also played a major role in Deckhouse II, Hastings, and Prairie near the Demilitarized Zone.

The Headquarters Battery of the 11th Marines and the remaining batteries of the artillery regiment's 2d and 4th Battalions had embarked for the United States or were preparing to embark by 31 March. The 1st Reconnaissance Battalion (-), 1st Engineer Battalion (-), 1st Medical Battalion (-), and 1st Motor Transport Battalion (-) also departed during March, each leaving one company behind for inclusion in the 3d MAB. The entire 11th Motor Transport Battalion redeployed.

Aviation redeployments continued more slowly. VMFA-115, which had ceased operations in February, moved to Iwakuni during March. VMO-2 stood down on 23 March, except for a detachment of OV-10As which would remain in Vietnam with the brigade. Also on the 23d, Marine Air Control Group (MACG) 18, which operated the wing's tactical air direction center (TADC) and direct air support center (DASC), began standing down, followed on the 28th by 1st MAW Headquarters and Marine Wing Headquarters Group (MWHG) 1. Although these units formally ceased regular operations, many Marines from them continued day-to-day air control and direction activities and wing staff functions. These Marines with their equipment were to be incorporated into the 3d MAB Headquarters when their parent organizations left Vietnam.[48]

As the Keystone Robin Charlie redeployment proceeded, the 1st Marines, its units spread from Hai Van Pass to the Que Son Mountains, kept as much pressure on the enemy as its limited resources permitted. On Charlie Ridge, elements of the 1st Battalion involved in Operation Upshur Stream secured patrol bases for teams from the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion. The reconnaissance Marines, continuing their search of the mountains, killed four enemy during March and directed artillery fire that accounted for six more. Their own losses amounted to one Marine killed and one slightly wounded. The 2d Battalion continued its antiguerrilla and counterrocket campaign in the lowlands south of Da Nang, killing or capturing a modest but steady toll of Viet Cong. Companies K and L of the 3d Battalion, patrolling north of Hill 510, had no contact but sighted a few enemy and captured

*The 155mm howitzers had been left in Vietnam attached to the 1st Battalion when the 11th Marines' general support battalion redeployed.

three 122mm rocket motors. With Lam Son 719 still going on, the enemy persisted in harassing supply convoys moving through the Hai Van Pass. Marines from the 3d Battalion helped Regional Forces repel seven minor attacks on bridges, convoys, and the railroad.[49]

With reduced forces and an expanded area of responsibility, the 1st Marines used its by now highly developed intelligence capabilities in an attempt to improve the effectiveness of ARVN operations. The regiment could trace the movements of enemy units in its tactical area of interest quite accurately, but often did not have troops available to exploit potentially profitable targets. Further, the VC and NVA usually stayed outside the Marines' established AOs. Major John S. Grinalds, the regimental S-2, reported that, "They would just hang right over the boundary so that we would have to get AO extensions to go out and get them but this was sort of counter to the policy at the moment, because we were trying to turn over responsibility for operations to the Vietnamese . . . ." Grinalds explained that the 1st Marines came to rely on Vietnamese units to exploit the intelligence they collected. He said that the 1st Marines would go to a specific Vietnamese commander who was responsible for the targeted area, "and present him an intelligence package, which was a map with all the trails and instances of past contact . . . ." Grinalds stated, the Marines, at times, even provided a "recommended scheme of maneuver and concept of operations for going after the target . . . ." Then the Marines would sit down with the operations and intelligence staffs of the Vietnamese unit and put the plan into action.[50]

According to Grinalds, this procedure worked well, especially with Colonel Thuc, commander of the 51st ARVN Regiment. "The only variations [on Marine suggestions] we got from him," Grinalds declared, "were improvements he made on the plans . . . ."[51]

Units of the 1st Marines were scheduled to continue operations in the Que Sons until 13 April, when the Army was to move into the area, but late in March, intelligence reports of an imminent new enemy offensive forced drastic curtailment of Imperial Lake. On 27 March, at the direction of the division, the 1st Marines ordered its 3d Battalion to move all but one in-

A sandbagged 106mm recoilless rifle position provides an excellent field of fire for Marine gunners on the northern perimeter of Hill 218 in the Que Son Mountains. The Army was to take over the Marine defensive positions in the Que Sons in April 1971.

Department of the Defense Photo (USMC) A373962

fantry platoon from Hill 510 to the Rocket Belt for defensive operations. The platoon left on Hill 510 was to protect the artillery there and to maintain a patrol base for reconnaissance teams which would take over the search of the area from the infantry. By 30 March, Companies K and L, less a platoon from L remaining on Hill 510, had returned to their battalion's sector of the Rocket Belt.[52]

As the 3d Battalion companies moved out of the Que Sons, the 1st Marine Division on 28 March issued orders ending Operation Upshur Stream and enlarging Imperial Lake to include Charlie Ridge and the mountains west and northwest of Da Nang. This order, issued in anticipation of the Marines' final departure from the Que Sons, in effect, made all search and destroy operations outside the populated lowlands part of Imperial Lake. The concept of operations for Imperial Lake remained unchanged; the burden of patrolling was to rest on reconnaissance teams, while the 1st Marines was to furnish one infantry battalion to protect havens for the teams and reinforce them when necessary. By the end of April, Imperial Lake would claim 126 NVA and 179 VC killed and 215 individual and 16 crew-served weapons captured.[53]

The Pacification Effort Diminishes

With the Keystone Robin Charlie redeployment, the Combined Unit Pacification Program came to an end for both the 1st and 5th Marines. Reduction of the 1st Marines' CUPP program, two squads from Company I and all of Company M in villages throughout the regiment's TAOI, began on 4 January. On that date, one of the Company I CUPPs was deactivated. On 12 February, at the recommendation of the 1st Marine Division, III MAF approved a schedule for disbanding the rest of the 1st Marines' CUPP units. The first four squads to be deactivated under this plan, including the remaining one from Company I, withdrew from their villages on 12 and 13 February, and returned to conventional infantry duties. CAPs relocated from more secure villages replaced three of these CUPPs. On 15 March, the 1st Marines deactivated three more CUPPs. Five days later, Company M (-), with the exception of four squads still operating as combined units, reverted to the control of the 3d Battalion and began patrolling as a regular infantry company in an AO northwest of Da Nang.* The last four CUPP squads were scheduled for deactivation on 15 April.[54]

The 5th Marines began dismantling its CUPP unit on 27 February when four squads from Company G withdrew from their villages. The remaining squads were combined in fewer villages and continued protecting Baldy, Route 1, and the Ba Ren Bridge. These CUPPs ceased operations on 3 March, as the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, Company G's parent organization, prepared to stand down. Company G reassembled at Baldy as a conventional rifle company and moved to Hill 34 with the rest of the battalion.*[55]

In its 18 months of existence, the Combined Unit Pacification Program had been effective in increasing hamlet security and combating enemy guerrillas. CUPP Marines and the RFs and PFs working with them had killed 578 Communists and captured or brought in 220 more as *Hoi Chanhs*.[56] Marine CUPP losses amounted to 46 dead and 254 wounded. Beyond the body count, the program demonstrated that ordinary infantry units could operate successfully when combined with RF and PFs, and the CUPP squads had improved overall security and increased people's confidence in the South Vietnamese government in the villages where they were stationed. Whether these improvements would outlast the departure of the Marines responsible for them remained to be seen.

While the CUPPs were deactivated, the other element of the Marines' hamlet-level and antiguerrilla force, the 2d Combined Action Group, continued operations. The 612 Marines, 48 Navy corpsmen, 719 PFs, and 102 RFs of the group conducted an average of 3,400 patrols and ambushes each month during January, February, and March. The CAPs, which then included 34 combined action platoons, had few significant contacts; it appeared that enemy units were trying to avoid them. Still, the CAPs continued to take a toll of Communist dead and prisoners. During January and February, for example, combined action units killed 31 enemy and captured eight, at a cost of 14 Marines and three Navy corpsmen seriously wounded and two PFs killed and 14 wounded. As an indication of increasing Regional and Popular Force strength during February the 2d CAG was able to relocate five CAPs in Hieu Duc, Dai Loc, Hoa Vang, and Dien Ban Districts, "as their former areas of operations were being well protected by Popular Forces."[57]

As part of the 3d MAB, the 2d CAG was to be one of the last Marine units to cease operations, but by

*The CUPP units of the 1st Marines had been under the operational control of the battalions in the TAOIs of which they were located. Company M and most of the teams had been under the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines before 20 March.

*As a CUPP company, Company G had been under direct operational control of the regiment.

Department of the Defense Photo (USMC) A373964

The 81mm mortar pit in the center of the picture is surrounded by well dug-in sandbagged bunkers on Hill 218. Two Marines on the far side of the picture can be seen looking out to the west during the last phase of Marine operations in the Que Sons.

the end of March it had begun strength reductions under a deactivation plan approved by III MAF. Between 21 and 23 March, six CAPs were disbanded. The other 29 platoons of the 2d CAG were scheduled to be dissolved between 13 April and 7 May.[58]

Using procedures worked out during the deactivation of the Combined Action Force in 1970, the allies accompanied each CUPP or CAP withdrawal from a village with an extensive psychological warfare campaign. Colonel Le Tri Tin, the Quang Nam Province Chief, began meeting with his district chiefs and the Combined Action Company commanders early in the year. According to Lieutenant Colonel John J. Tolnay, the 2d CAG commander, Tin "impressed upon them [the district chiefs] the fact that they're going to have to take over more and more of the effort and that they're going to have to operate alone." The district chiefs then carried the same message to the village authorities.

Before, during, and after the removal of each CUPP or CAP, American and South Vietnamese psychological warfare units saturated the affected village with leaflets and loudspeaker broadcasts and held face-to-face meetings with as many inhabitants as possible. Through all these media, the allies stressed the same theme: that the local RF and PF troops now could keep the Viet Cong out of the village without help from the U.S. Marines. Allied propaganda recounted every military success of the local forces, crediting them rather than the Marines with the enemy killed and weapons captured. CUPP and CAP deactivations usually included elaborate ceremonies with speeches by village and district dignitaries, a band whenever possible, exchanges of gifts, and presentations of decorations. The effectiveness of these efforts in convincing Vietnamese civilians that they were not being abandoned was difficult to assess. Lieutenant Colonel Tolnay believed that most of the people "did accept the fact that we were leaving. They watched us go with great reluctance [but] not with any great fear that their PFs could not handle the situation."[59]

On at least one occasion, the psychological campaign failed. On 3 March, the members of CUPP 10

of Company G, 5th Marines, stationed in a hamlet near the Ba Ren Bridge, were packing their equipment to move to Baldy when they were surrounded by about 200 Vietnamese. The crowd included Regional and Popular Force soldiers and members of a Provincial Reconnaissance Unit (PRU),* as well as local civilians. As a RF lieutenant and the PRU team leader stood by, the Vietnamese began boldy picking up articles of the Marines' equipment and personal effects and walking away. One PRU member entered the CUPP command post bunker in search of more loot. When a Marine challenged him, the Vietnamese drew his pistol. The Marine platoon leader finally persuaded the intruder to holster his weapon and leave, but other Vietnamese broke down the back door of the bunker and swarmed in. After a vain appeal for help to the RF lieutenant and the PRU leader, the CUPP commander set fire to the bunker to stop further stealing. Then he and his men hailed two passing Marine jeeps on the highway and hastily drove away. As the Marines left, scattered small arms fire from the Regional Force soldiers slightly wounded three of them. The CUPP squad lost four M16s, a .45 caliber pistol, an M79 grenade launcher, and many other pieces of government equipment and personal property. The CUPP commander's bunker which was set on fire spread to another bunker nearby and destroyed most of the ammunition of the RFs and PFs guarding the bridge.[60]

Cooperation between U.S. and ARVN commanders at all levels prevented other major outbreaks of this sort and provided better protection for deactivating CUPPs and CAPs. Nevertheless, many CUPP and CAP Marines reported harassment and stealing by Vietnamese as the Americans left their villages; a few units found it necessary to station armed guards around their property while awaiting transportation. ARVN and Regional Force soldiers, especially, grew more aggressively hostile toward Americans as redeployment continued. On the other hand, Lieutenant Colonel Tolnay reported that the relationship between popular force soldiers and their Marine counterparts in the CAPs often became closer during the final weeks, as though the local troops were trying to obtain every last bit of training, help, and advice from the Marines before they left. "We had relatively little stealing," Tolnay declared. "In fact, toward the end there, if . . . a PF . . . did steal something, a word to the district chief was sufficient to have him send his 3 out there and the purloined goods appeared. This . . . was not the case with the RFs, however . . . ."[61]

Whether in CAPs, CUPPs, or conventional combat and support units, Marines kept up civic action efforts until they redeployed. As their time in Vietnam grew shorter, Marine units concentrated on short-term, inexpensive activities, such as gifts of building materials, foodstuffs, or school supplies. They also continued the always-popular MedCaps. Units of the 2d Combined Action Group tried to help the people in their AOs obtain civic action assistance and supplies from South Vietnamese government agencies, but this endeavor met with frustration. The 2d CAG reported in February that "The slow response of Vietnamese to civic action requests from civilians has seriously hampered this effort."[62]

During the first months of 1971, the 1st Marine Division continued to assist the Vietnamese refugee resettlement villages on Go Noi Island and along Route 4. On Go Noi Island, Marine engineers cleared grass and brush from almost 1,250 acres of farmland, prepared a site for a third village, and constructed a road to it. Then they moved to the settlement of Ky Ngoc on Route 4, where they cleared 350 more acres and prepared them for cultivation. The resettlement project continued to prosper as the Marines redeployed. By the end of March two villages were firmly established on Go Noi, with work beginning on a third. Over 200 houses had been completed in Ky Ngoc; construction of 50 more would start as soon as tin roofing and lumber became available. The various districts had drawn up five additional ambitious resettlement plans, and the province CORDS advisor reported that Quang Nam "could experience a major breakthrough in this program provided the present momentum is maintained and support is received in a timely manner. The interest, initiative, and desire . . . of the people [are] not lacking."[63]

The assistance to the Go Noi and Ky Ngoc projects was a last gesture for III MAF. Most of the Marine engineers who had done so much work on the new villages redeployed during March. Further signalling the end of Marine Corps civic action in Vietnam, on 24 March, the Commandant announced that after 30 April 1971, no more contributions would be accepted for the Marine Corps Reserve Civic Action Fund (MCRCAF). About $15,000 remained in this fund, which was administered by CARE, Inc. III MAF was

*Provincial Reconnaissance Units were paramilitary organizations which worked under the province governments in operations against the VCI.

to continue expenditures from this balance until 14 April, when it would turn whatever money remained over to the 3d MAB.[64]

As their numbers dwindled during February and March, the Marines remaining in Quang Nam had reason to doubt that civic action had won many Vietnamese hearts and minds. The harassment and looting experienced by some of the deactivating CUPP and CAP units were not isolated incidents. They were only manifestations of a wave of open Vietnamese hostility to Americans that had become apparent in Quang Nam in mid-1970 and intensified in early 1971. Colonel John Chism, USA, the Province Senior Advisor, warned on 3 March: "Anti-foreign feeling continues at an endemic level. Incidents are becoming more numerous and testy. . . . Further increases can be expected as opportunists will use incidents to further nefarious ends."[65]

Motor vehicle accidents had long been a source of antagonism between American servicemen and Vietnamese civilians.* Now accidents frequently triggered potentially violent confrontations. Angry civilian crowds, sometimes joined by ARVN or RF or PF soldiers, would surround Marine or other American vehicles involved in even minor mishaps. Holding the vehicle and driver captive by weight of massed bodies and sometimes by surrounding them with barbed wire or threatening the driver at gunpoint, the Vietnamese would demand ransom, in the form of immediate compensation payments for real and imagined injuries or damages.

To avert violence in these confrontations and to mollify the Vietnamese on 20 October 1970, III MAF had organized a special Foreign Claims Investgation (FCI) unit in the 1st Military Police Battalion. The unit, under Second Lieutenant John A. Van Steenberg, consisted of three mobile teams, each composed of a NCO investigator with at least limited Vietnamese language training, a Vietnamese interpretet, and a Marine driver/radio operator. While it was responsible for investigating all civilian claims for damages resulting from incidents involving Marines, the unit spent most of its time on traffic accidents. An investigating team would accompany the MP patrol to the scene of each accident, question the Vietnamese witnesses, and, if the facts warranted, help Vietnamese victims file their claims for compensation. When necessary to calm "potentially explosive" situations, the investigators could make small payments on the spot, but they usually tried instead to assure the Vietnamese of rapid, fair processing of regular claims. The teams were busy during the first months of 1971. They investigated 24 incidents in January, 18 in February, and 15 in March. By this time, they could complete an investigation in 12 days, from first notification of the accident to filing of a report with the Army Foreign Claims Commission at XXIV Corps Headquarters, which actually made the damage payments.*[66]

Speedier processing of civilian damage claims partially alleviated one source of Vietnamese hostility, but threats and occasional violence against Marines and other U.S. personnel continued. On 5 March, after the attack on CUPP 10 at the Ba Ren Bridge, Lieutenant General Robertson visited Lieutenant General Lam, the I Corps commander, to express his deep concern about this and other incidents and to request Lam's cooperation in maintaining harmony among the allies. General Robertson, noting that he had known General Lam through two tours in Vietnam, recalled that in all their mutual dealings, "I was frank with him and I felt he was the same with me." Following the meeting with Lam, Robertson wrote to Lieutenant General Sutherland. He emphasized to the XXIV Corps commander the danger that continued Vietnamese assaults on Marines "could well result in overreaction by U.S. personnel with . . . tragic consequences" and urged Sutherland also to discuss

*Motor vehicle accidents, many of them resulting from a combination, in Brigadier General Simmon's words, of "unauthorized driver, alcohol, unauthorized runs, or [mis]appropriated vehicle," were a major noncombat concern of all Marine commands. During the first nine months of 1970, the 1st Marine Division alone lost three Marines killed and 85 injured in traffic smashups, and these same accidents left 39 Vietnamese dead and 81 injured. Besides speeding up payment of compensation, all major Marine commands tried to instill safer driving habits in their troops, tighten control of use of vehicles, and impose more certain and severe punishment of Marine traffic violators. 1st MarDiv, Talking Paper, dtd 2Oct70, Leadership&Discipline Notebook, 1st MarDivDocs, gives accident statistics. The Simmons quotation is from BGen Edwin H. Simmons, Orientation Talk to New Lieutenants in 1st MarDiv, ca. early 71, p. 45 (OralHistColl, MCHC). For an example of the effort to improve Marine driving, see CG 1stMarDiv msg to DistList, dtd 14Aug70, in Leadership&Discipline Ntbk, 1stMarDivDocs.

*Before establishment of the FCI unit, civilian damage claims against Marines were investigated first by the unit to which the involved Marines belonged. The unit then reported the facts and a recommendation for payment or nonpayment to a Foreign Claims Commission at Force Logistic Command. The commission at FLC then forwarded the claim again to the Army commission at XXIV Corps. This system was cumbersome and slow, contributing to Vietnamese resentment of the Americans, and creation of the FCI unit was designed to shorten and simplify the entire claims process.

Department of the Defense Photo (USMC) A373797

In March 1971, a well-protected 105mm howitzer from Battery C, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines on Hill 510 fires at a suspected enemy staging area in support of maneuvering Marine infantry and reconnaissance troops in Operation Imperial Lake in the Que Sons.

this problem directly with General Lam. "Hopefully," Robertson concluded, "our combined efforts will contribute to the maintenance of U.S./Vietnamese good relationships by correcting a most serious situation."[67]

U.S. and South Vietnamese authorities managed to prevent a major explosion of violence. In fact, on 25 April, XXIV Corps actually declared Da Nang city "on limits" for off-duty American servicemen for the first time in over a year.* Tension still persisted. In May, just after the 1st Marine Division redeployed, the assistant division commander, Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, again reported a "rising tide of anti-American feeling . . . in Da Nang and Quang Nam Province." He continued:

> Some of the villagers have made it evident that they are sorry to see our CAP and CUPP teams leave their hamlets, but most seem apathetic. There have been numerous acts of arrogance and even active belligerence on the part of the ARVN as well as the RF and PF . . . .[68]

The timing, if not the causes, of this outbreak of open hostility was a matter of speculation and debate among Marines and other Americans in Quang Nam. Some attributed the outbursts to the surfacing of long pent-up resentment of the foreigners. As Lieutenant General Robertson put it, perhaps the Vietnamese were simply "getting tired of seeing us around." Colonel Chism, the Province Senior Advisor, pointed out that the Vietnamese presidential election campaign, already under way, would inevitably intensify political and social tensions of all kinds and might lead to deliberate creation of incidents by candidates or parties. It was logical to assume that the VC might be

*Da Nang and most other cities and villages in Quang Nam previously had been declared "off limits" to all U.S. military personnel except those on official business with written passes from their unit COs or a division staff section head. 1stMarDiv, DivO 1050, dtd 3Feb70, in 1st MarDiv ComdC, Feb70. For procedure for travel by Marines into Da Nang after the restriction was lifted, see 3d MAB Bde Bulletin 11240, dtd 29Apr71, 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71, Tab A-4. Additional discussion of troop morale and recreation programs is in Chapter 20.

stirring up or at least directing resentment, but this was difficult to prove in any individual case. It was possible, also, that many of the incidents were the Vietnamese people's expression of anger at the Americans for going home and leaving them to fight on alone. Two years later, General Robertson summed up his puzzlement at the causes of this problem in words that could serve as the epitaph of the entire pacification program: "You know human beings don't always respond the way we think they should, or think they will . . . ."[69]

The Enemy Grows Bolder

If the reactions of supposedly friendly Vietnamese to the American withdrawal seemed inconsistent and unpredictable, enemy reaction was completely in character. The VC intensified all forms of pressure, not on the Marines, but on the South Vietnamese government, armed forces, and people. Propaganda and incidents of terrorism increased in frequency. At the end of March the VC, supported for the first time in many months by large North Vietnamese units, mounted a major military offensive.

The hamlet-level war of assassination, kidnapping, vandalism, and propaganda never slackened. During January, according to III MAF, eight civilians in Quang Nam were killed, 11 wounded, and 41 abducted in terrorist attacks. The enemy took advantage of the Tet holiday truce at the end of January to conduct loudspeaker broadcasts, political indoctrination meetings, and flag raisings in many hamlets. In one village, the VC, in a graphic display of power, publicly took 12 carbines away from unresisting members of the local PSDF. Terrorism casualties increased in February; 11 people died and 62 were injured. Mining of a civilian bus northeast of An Hoa on the 23d accounted for five of the dead and 17 of the wounded. Violence continued through March, with 18 more persons killed, 53 injured, and 14 kidnapped.[70]

Viet Cong assassins took a steady toll of South Vietnamese government officials, especially in the villages and hamlets. On 11 January, for instance, four VC with AK-47s entered Duc Ky hamlet, less than a mile from Hill 55. They murdered two hamlet officials, wounded four other people, and escaped. Five days later, the hamlet chief of Phu Huong in Dai Loc District died in an ambush on Route 4. Finding a replacement for him proved difficult, because "no one wanted to be elected for fear of the VC." Occasionally, higher ranking officials fell victim. On 9 February, for example, the Viet Cong blew up the national police activities chief for I Corps by planting a time bomb in his car.*[71]

As the Marines reduced or withdrew their forces in contested areas, the enemy frequently responded with a show of strength. Nui Kim Son, a Viet Cong-infested hamlet at the gates of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines base at Camp Lauer, was the scene of two such displays. On 4 March, three VC entered the military trash dump near the hamlet and killed a local woman who had been an informer for American intelligence. Two of the murderers were quickly captured, but according to a 2d Battalion report, many villagers blamed the woman's death on the Marines "because of their not providing adequate protection." On 27 March, after the 2d Battalion had pulled out of Camp Lauer, a Marine patrol in Nui Kim Son reported:

> The complexion of Nui Kim Son has greatly changed in the last four days. All South V[ietnamese] flags and government posters on buildings have been etched out with black paint. All South V[ietnamese] flags are absent from village flag poles.[72]

During the first weeks of March, enemy military activity increased in Quang Nam. On the 4th, 16 rockets hit Da Nang. Throughout the lowlands, allied patrols had more frequent contact with small enemy units. Prisoners taken in some of these engagements claimed that they were reconnoitering objectives for a major attack. From these indications and from other bits of information, III MAF gradually pieced together the plan of a new Communist offensive, to be launched late in March and called the K-850 Campaign. Like previous offensives, this one was to consist of many small-scale ground and fire attacks on district headquarters, territorial force positions, and CUPP and CAP units, supplemented by rocket bombardment of Da Nang, Marble Mountain, and other installations. The enemy preparations seemed unusually extensive and thorough, indicating the probability of more numerous and possibly more sustained attacks than in past campaigns. Through the K-850

*Some of this death and destruction may not have been the work of the Viet Cong. According to the PSA for Quang Nam, "at least" 15 incidents in late 1970 and early 1971 resulted from fights among the non-Communist political factions in the province. "Although these have been ascribed to the VC it later develops that they were most likely local power struggles." The advisor remarked, "another unique facet of Quang Nam politics is the willingness with which party members tend to settle their differences by force." CORDS Quang Nam Province Senior Advisor, Report for Period Ending 28Feb71, dtd 3Mar71, CMH Files.

Campaign, it appeared the VC/NVA had decided to progressively increase the pressure against the GVN forces and, in general, the Vietnamese pacification effort as final withdrawal of Marines from Quang Nam neared.

On 27 March, the 1st Marine Division put all subordinate units on alert against rocket and mortar attacks. The next night, with low-hanging clouds and darkness to cover their movements, Communist rocket units opened fire on Da Nang and nearby allied positions. Other enemy troops conducted attacks on the Duc Duc, Dien Ban, Dai Loc, and Que Son District Headquarters. The enemy also put heavy pressure on CUPP and CAP hamlets, and refugee resettlement villages and attempted to destroy bridges and cut highways throughout the province.[73]

The rocket bombardment, which began at 0157 on the 29th and continued sporadically until 0453, did relatively little damage. Twelve 122mm rockets fell on Da Nang airfield, wounding one U.S. Army soldier and killing two Vietnamese civilians and wounding six. The rockets damaged a building and an airplane. Six more rockets hit Marble Mountain airfield, but only two struck the base itself, slightly damaging two UH-1Es. Another wrecked an ARVN building, and the remaining three overshot and blew up harmlessly in the ocean off China Beach. Three more of the 122mm rockets exploded in Da Nang City. These destroyed an automobile and a civilian electrical shop.[74]

The heaviest ground attack occurred at Duc Duc District Headquarters, just west of An Hoa on the eastern bank of the Thu Bon River and within easy striking distance from Base Area 112.[75] Here, for the first time since late 1970, *Front 4* committed its sole remaining North Vietnamese regular infantry unit, the *38th Regiment*. Local guerrillas had been preparing for this assault since early January, reconnoitering allied positions and readying the ground for the NVA advance. Beginning on 22 March, guerrillas made a series of minor attacks on Liberty Bridge and Liberty Road, the only land link between Duc Duc and allied reinforcements.

At 0210 on 29 March, an estimated two battalions of the *38th Regiment*, consisting largely of well-equipped men fresh from North Vietnam, reinforced by two Viet Cong sapper battalions, stormed into Duc Duc. Under cover of a mortar and rocket barrage, the NVA struck directly at the district headquarters compound, while the sappers began systematically destroying the nearby civilian hamlets. Duc Duc's defenders, the 412th Regional Force Company and the 123d Popular Force Platoon with a handful of U.S. Army advisors, fell back to the district headquarters compound and made a stand. Soon the North Vietnamese had them completely surrounded and enemy infantry had reached the perimeter defensive wire. The cloud ceiling, down to 600 or 800 feet, prevented fixed-wing air support from coming to the aid of the defenders.

With the villages around Duc Duc in flames, a VC flag flying near the district headquarters, and the district compound under intense attack, the 1st MAW's Black Hammer helicopter patrol intervened with decisive effect. That night, the patrol consisted of a UH-1E searchlight aircraft from HML-167, flown by Captain Thomas C. McDonald, the flight leader, and two of the new AH-1Js from HML-367, which that month had taken over the gunship assignment of the Black Hammer mission. Lieutenant Colonel Clifford E. Reese, commander of HML-367, was on board one of the gunships.*

At 0245, the Black Hammer helicopters had just finished refuelling at Marble Mountain after completing their second patrol of the Rocket Belt. As enemy rockets began exploding on the airstrip, the Marines manned their helicopters and lifted off. The Da Nang DASC almost immediately instructed them to go to the aid of Duc Duc. Flying low under the clouds, the three helicopters, with running lights off to reduce danger from enemy antiaircraft fire, headed southwestward. In spite of this precaution, ground fire forced the aircraft to fly part of the way above the low clouds. The Marine aviators eventually located Duc Duc by the light from the burning villages, which created a bright spot in the overcast.

As the flight approached the town, Captain McDonald contacted the Army advisors by radio. They told him that the district compound was in danger of being overrun and gave the Marines clearance to fire at targets anywhere around their perimeter. The Army advisors also stated that they would be unable to direct air strikes from the ground, as enemy fire had forced them under cover.

McDonald's UH-1E led the Black Hammer helicopters to the attack. Dropping to altitudes as low as 400 feet and air speeds as slow as 60 miles per hour, the

*Reese initially had piloted one of the AH-1Js, but before taking off for Duc Duc, he switched places with one of the other pilots and flew the Duc Duc mission as a copilot and gunner.

light Huey located targets, either by spotting gun flashes and tracers or by using its infrared observation device, and illuminated them with its Xenon searchlight. Then the Huey and the Sea Cobras fired long bursts down the light beam from machine guns and 20mm cannons. Initially, Lieutenant Colonel Reese's AH-1J concentrated cannon and rocket fire on a knoll just west of the compound where large flashes indicated a RPG or mortar position. The other aircraft sought and attacked targets all around the besieged district headquarters, at times firing at enemy no more than 30 meters from the South Vietnamese defenses. Heavy fire from automatic weapons on the ground answered that of the helicopters, especially when the searchlight was turned on. Several times, the helicopters had to climb back into the overcast to evade enemy gunners, but each time they returned to attack.

The Black Hammet flight remained in action over Duc Duc for almost four hours. Each of the AH-1Js flew back to Marble Mountain to refuel and rearm while the other stayed on station at Duc Duc. Finally, the North Vietnamese broke off the attack and fell back northwestward toward the Thu Bon River, where they began wading the river and paddling across in boats. The Huey and the gunships pursued the NVA. One of the AH-1J blasted the boats in midstream and sank at least six of them. North Vietnamese trying to cover the withdrawal continued to fire at the helicopters and finally wounded the light operator in the Huey. With the assault on Duc Duc beaten back and their own casualty to care for, the Marine aviators broke off the action and returned to Marble Mountain, landing at about 0600. In the night battle, the AH-1Js had expended 2,800 rounds of 20mm cannon ammunition and 64 rockets. They and the Huey were credited with four confirmed enemy dead, a probable 10 more killed, and six boats destroyed.[76]

The fighting around Duc Duc continued for the next several days. Units of the 51st ARVN regiment, sent to reinforce the RF and PF garrison, made repeated contact with the North Vietnamese. In the initial attack and the two days of fighting that followed, the North Vietnamese lost at least 59 men killed, while the RFs and PFs who had defended the compound suffered 20 dead and 26 wounded. Tragically 103 South Vietnamese civilians had died in the blazing hamlets; 96 more had been injured and 37 kidnapped. At least 1,500 homes had been demolished. In spite of government counterattacks, the *38th Regiment* remained in the Duc Duc area, instead of pulling back into the mountains. On 3 April, the NVA again attacked the Duc Duc District Headquarters and neighboring hamlets with 100 rounds of mortar fire, numerous RPG rounds, and small arms fire, but did not follow with another ground assault. It was clear by mid-April that the Communists had opened a new offensive area of operations west of An Hoa, and they appeared willing to remain in the Duc Duc District area and challenge the 51st ARVN.

Elsewhere in Quang Nam, units of the 2d Combined Action Group came under heavy pressure on the night of 28-29 March. Nine enemy rockets exploded near the group headquarters compound outside Hoi An, and most CACO command posts were attacked by small arms or mortar fire. Almost all of the CAPs in the field reported some type of enemy contact. Combined action units quickly counterattacked. For example, on the night of the 29th, a patrol from CAP 2-2-2 south of Dai Loc spotted a force of about 90 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong and called in helicopter gunships and artillery. Sweeping the area the next morning, the CAP found only one dead enemy, but local villagers reported that the shelling and strafing had wounded at least 40 more Communists. Two days later, elements of two CAPs sweeping near Dien Ban District Headquarters engaged about 50 North Vietnamese in a daylight battle. Supported by artillery and gunships, the Marines and PFs killed 16 enemy and captured five AK-47s, at a cost to themselves of one PF soldier killed. In the entire flurry of action during the opening days of the K-850 Campaign, the 2d CAG accounted for a total of 44 enemy dead and 12 prisoners. The Marines and their RF and PF counterparts in the same period lost one Marine and seven PFs killed and 14 Marines and 17 PFs wounded. The intensity of fighting experienced by the 2d CAG during March, particularly late in the month when the enemy's K-850 Campaign kicked off, was greater than any other period since the previous July.[77]

Enemy harassment of the Hai Van Pass continued during the first day of the offensive. On the morning of 30 March, the Viet Cong planted three command-detonated mines on the railroad track. At 0830, they exploded one mine under the locomotive of a passing train and opened fire on the train with mortars, RPGs, and small arms. Small arms fire also covered a nearby defensive position manned by RF soldiers and Marines from Company I, 3d Battalion, 1st Marines. The Marines and RFs returned fire and the Marines

called in a helicopter to evacuate eight RFs and one Marine wounded in the attack.

As the helicopter, a CH-46D from HMM-262 flown by First Lieutenant Steven A. Kux, settled down near the railroad tracks, the Viet Cong set off a second mine. The explosion shattered the helicopter, killing one Marine and wounding seven. Lieutenant Kux, painfully wounded in the face, helped pull survivors out of his wrecked aircraft. Then, using a Company I radio, he called in another medical evacuation flight and directed air strikes on suspected enemy positions and escape routes. The air strikes and a reaction force of Marines and RFs drove off the enemy. The Regional Force soldiers later found and removed the third mine planted on the tracks.[78]

During the first 10 days of April, the tempo of action gradually declined. The enemy launched more mortar, rocket, and occasional ground attacks on bridges, refugee villages, and RF and PF compounds. On 5 April, they fired seven rockets into Da Nang, and on the 8th and 9th they hit Hill 55 with eight rockets. They fired five or six more rockets into Da Nang on the 9th. None of the rocket attacks inflicted significant damage, and after the last bombardment of Da Nang the incidence of all forms of enemy action declined sharply.[79]

It was clear, neverthless, that the K-850 Campaign was far from over and that it had features different from those of earlier such offensives. Throughout April, frequent contact between allied patrols and enemy groups indicated that most NVA and VC main force formations were remaining in the lowlands and being resupplied there, rather than pulling back into the mountains. Further, allied intelligence agencies believed that an element of *Front 4 Headquarters* now was operating in the populated areas. Most important, the North Vietnamese *38th Regiment* had reappeared on the battlefield after a long absence and was continuing offensive operations around An Hoa and Duc Duc. All signs, in short, pointed toward further attacks in the coming weeks.[80]

The enemy, it seemed, had gained little in the first phase of the K-850 Campaign. They had overrun no major U.S. or South Vietnamese positions and had suffered much heavier losses in men and material than had the allies. III MAF conceded, nevertheless, that the enemy offensive was at least a limited political and psychological success, concluding:

> . . . although casualties and damage inflicted during this phase of the K-850 Campaign were negligible in proportion to the ordnance and lives expended by the enemy, he may have succeeded psychologically. The Communists demonstrated again to the Vietnamese populace that they can and will carry out attacks despite the best efforts of the allied forces. Combined with the reduction in U.S. forces, this demonstration could have a detrimental effect on the ARVN, the Territorial Forces, and the civilian population.[81]

CHAPTER 13

The Marines Leave Da Nang

Operations in Southern Quang Nam, 1-13 April 1971
Activation and Operations of the 3d Marine Amphibious Brigade—The End of Keystone Robin Charlie
Keystone Oriole Alpha: The Final Stand-Down—Quang Nam after the Marines Left

Operations in Southern Quang Nam, 1-13 April 1971

By the beginning of April, the war in I Corps was reverting to its pre-Lam Son 719 pattern. Allied forces in Quang Tri and Thua Thien had resumed saturation patrolling of the populated lowlands. The allies also mounted occasional large-scale sweeps of enemy base areas, notably Operation Lam Son 720, a combined offensive in the A Shau and Da Krong Valleys by the 101st Airborne and 1st ARVN Divisions. In Quang Nam, as the first phase of the Communists' K-850 Campaign came to an end, the 51st ARVN Regiment and the South Vietnamese RFs and PFs began another in the Hoang Dieu series of operations. The new offensive, Operation Hoang Dieu 107, was aimed at destroying enemy local forces and protecting the rice harvest.

The 1st Marines, now the only active infantry unit of III MAF, kept up small-unit warfare within its TAOI. The regiment's 3d Battalion maintained its defense of the Hai Van Pass and patrolled and ambushed in the northwestern quadrant of the Rocket Belt. This battalion had a forward command post and one platoon on Hill 510 in the Que Sons, securing an artillery firebase and a haven for reconnaissance elements in Operation Imperial Lake. Also participating in Imperial Lake, the 1st Battalion used a platoon to protect a reconnaissance patrol base on western Charlie Ridge, while continuing to defend its portion of the Rocket Belt. The 2d Battalion coordinated the defense of Division Ridge and kept Marines in the field in pursuit of the VCI in the hamlets south of Da Nang.[1]

With the enemy regrouping after the initial surge of the K-850 offensive, the Marines had few contacts during the first two weeks of April, although boobytraps remained a threat. Marine artillery accounted for most of the casualties inflicted on the enemy. On 10 April, for example, Marines manning the Integrated Observation Device on Hill 65 spotted a substantial group of VC and NVA with packs and rifles in the Arizona Territory south of the Vu Gia River and called for a fire mission by howitzers of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines. RFs and PFs from Dai Loc District, sweeping the area after the artillery bombardment, reported finding 30 dead Viet Cong.[2]

In these final days before it redeployed, the 1st Marine Division made one last drive into Base Area 112 west of An Hoa. The division conducted this operation at the direction of MACV, which had received information indicating that U.S. and allied prisoners were being held in a camp hidden in the hills of western Quang Nam. III MAF intelligence officers doubted the accuracy of these reports, but the plight of American POWs had become a major political and diplomatic issue and the authorities in Saigon wanted to exploit even the slimmest chance of a spectacular rescue.*[3]

Accordingly, III MAF on 7 April issued orders for the attack, codenamed Operation Scott Orchard. Under the plan, a provisional composite battery of 105mm and 155mm howitzers from the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines was to reopen FSB Dagger, used the previous autumn for Operation Catawba Falls. Then the 1st Marines, employing a reinforced infantry battalion, was to make a helicopter assault on the hills west of Dagger, where the POW camp was supposed to be located. The infantry were to search the area and, if they found an enemy prison compound, try to free the inmates. III MAF alerted Company A, 1st Medical Battalion to receive and care for diseased, dehydrated, and debilitated former prisoners and ordered that the attacking infantry be equipped with bolt cutters. Advance information about the operation was to be closely restricted and aerial reconnaissance of Dagger

*Since the beginning of major American involvement in the war, the Communists had refused to follow the Geneva Convention provisions governing accounting for and communicating with prisoners of war. By mid-1970, under increasing pressure from families of captured servicemen, the Nixon administration had begun making a public issue of the problem, using the Paris peace talks and other diplomatic channels to press the Communists for information about prisoners. The administration also tried forceable rescue. In late November 1970, a force of Army Rangers and Special Forces troops made a heliborne raid on Son Tay POW camp about 20 miles from the center of Hanoi. The raiders got in and out without casualties, but found the camp empty. For a discussion of the Son Tay raid and the POW issue in general, see *Time*, 7Dec70, pp. 15-21.

and the objective area kept to a minimum to avoid warning the enemy.[4]

Despite the restriction on conducting an extensive reconnaissance of the target area, Lieutenant Colonel Roy E. Moss, then battalion commander of 2d Batralion, 1st Marines, recalled that he got permission from Colonel Kelley to make a quick aerial reconnaissance:

> Major Connie Silard and Majot Jim Clark, the pilots of the helicopter, and my S-3, Major Tom Campbell, departed the afternoon of the 6th in a UH-1E to have a look at the area. We knew we would have the opportunity to make only one pass over the objective area, locate the LZs, and plot them on our maps. The area near Fire Support Base Dagger was extremely dense and suitable LZs were extremely difficult to spot, even from the air. We quickly pinpointed six suitable landing zones and then exited the area quickly in order not to give away our future intentions.[5]

Following an intensive A-4 preparation of LZ Dagger, the operation began at 1045 on 7 April, when helicopters from MAG-16 inserted two teams from Company A, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, a total of 14 Marines and two Navy corpsmen, on FSB Dagger. The teams searched the firebase for boobytraps and found two old ones. They had a brief firefight with three to five enemy, who quickly fled. A provisional platoon from Headquarters and Service Company of the 1st Battalion landed in trace of the reconnaissance units. At 1100, helicopters began bringing in two 105mm and four 155mm howitzers, with their crews and an infantry platoon. The infantry relieved the reconnaissance Marines in defense of the firebase. One of the reconnaissance teams was then lifted by helicopter to Hill 37, while the other remained at Dagger. By 1800, the artillery pieces were in position and ready to fire.

On the 8th, MAG-16 helicopters inserted five infantry companies (three from the 2d Battalion and one each from the 1st and 3d Battalions) under the operational control of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines into six landing zones. The helicopters also brought in four more reconnaissance teams. This complicated lift into six widely separated landing zones, which involved 24 CH-46s, 4 CH-53s, and extensive fixed-wing and gunship support, went so smoothly that the 1st MAW command history called it "a culmination of six years' improvement on techniques and procedures developed prior to the Vietnam War."[6]

As III MAF had expected, Scott Orchard turned out to be a blow at empty air. From the 8th until the 11th, the rifle companies and reconnaissance teams maneuvered through the rugged country west of FSB Dagger. They found a scattering of small abandoned camps and caches and a number of old trails, but no prison compounds. Except for a few patrols and stragglers, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong had left long before the Marines arrived. The Marines did catch a few enemy. On 9 April, for example, a patrol from Company F encountered a lone Viet Cong in an open field and killed him. The following day, Marines from Company K spotted 15-30 North Vietnamese regulars wearing new-looking green utilities. In the ensuing exchange of fire, neither side suffered any casualties, and the NVA quickly withdrew. The artillery on FSB Dagger fired 235 missions during the operation, only two of them against observed enemy troops. On 11 April, helicopters lifted the infantry companies back to their battalion TAOI and extracted the reconnaissance teams. The artillery evacuated FSB Dagger the next day. In this, their last search and destroy operation of the war, the Marines suffered no casualties. They killed four enemy, three of them by artillery; took one prisoner; and captured 12 weapons and miscellaneous ammunition, food, clothing, and equipment. While establishing that Base Area 112 was still a very active line of communication, the Marines found no evidence of a prison camp.[7]

East of the area of Operation Scott Orchard, elements of the 196th Brigade began moving into the Que Sons as the last Marine units cleared out of the mountains. On 6 April, part of Company B, 3d Battalion, 21st U.S. Infantry arrived by helicopter on Hill 510. The next day, Company C from the same battalion occupied Hill 65 to protect the Army artillery already stationed there. On 7 and 8 April, the forward command post, an infantry platoon from the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, and a 105mm howitzer detachment from Battery C, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines left Hill 510, the infantry elements returning to their battalion TAOI and the artillery going to the Northern Artillery Cantonment (NAC). On the 11th, the Marine mortar detachment displaced from Hill 425 to NAC. This movement, and the evacuation of FSB Dagger the following day, completed the removal of Marines from the area of Quang Nam south of the Vu Gia and Thu Bon.

At 2400 on 13 April, as planned earlier, the 1st Marine Division formally transferred responsibility for this portion of its TAOI to the Americal Division. By that time, all four companies of the 3d Battalion, 21st Infantry were operating around Hill 510. Company, D of the 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry had taken over the

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Photo of MajGen Alan J. Armstrong, Commanding General, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, and Commanding General, 3d Marine Amphibious Brigade.

defense of Hill 65. Elements of the 11th Combat Aviation Group, which would furnish helicopter support for the 196th Brigade, were moving in as tenants of MAG-16 at Marble Mountain.[8]

Activation and Operations of the 3d Marine Amphibious Brigade

With all Marines out of southern Quang Nam and the units scheduled for Keystone Robin Charlie either embarked or completing preparations for embarkation, the time had come to activate the 3d Marine Amphibious Brigade.* The organization, composition, and mission of the brigade had been laboriously worked out during the previous year. Planning and preparation for the activation of the brigade headquarters had begun in early February 1971, because the process would be complicated and had to be conducted without interrupting control of operations and redeployments.

On 5 February, Lieutenant General William K. Jones, CG FMFPac, sent Lieutenant General Robertson a plan and schedule for command restructuring in the Western Pacific, which established the framework for activating the MAB. Under this plan, III MAF Headquarters would relocate to Okinawa on 14 April, and assume command of the 3d Marine Division, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, and 3d Force Service Regiment (FSR). The same day, the Commanding General, 1st MAW, Major General Alan J. Armstrong, was to activate and take command of the 3d MAB at Da Nang, while the bulk of the wing headquarters redeployed to Iwakuni, Japan to join the 1st MAW (Rear). The former rear headquarters then would become the new 1st MAW Headquarters and control all Marine air units in the Western Pacific outside Vietnam. Brigadier General Robert F. Conley, who commanded 1st MAW (Rear), was to become the new 1st MAW commander. Also on 14 April, Major General Widdecke and the 1st Marine Division Headquarters were to move to Camp Pendleton and assume command of all division units already there.[9]

Shortly before General Jones set the schedule for the changes of command, on 3 February, the 1st Marine Division and 1st MAW staffs began informal discussion of the problems to be expected in organizing the brigade headquarters and transferring control of operations to it. Following these discussions, on 24 February, Brigadier General Simmons, the ADC, proposed that a small staff be organized on 1 March to devote full time to MAB activation planning. This staff, Simmons said, should be headed by the brigade chief of staff-designate, Colonel Boris J. Frankovic, and should include "one well qualified planner, preferably of field-grade," each from III MAF, the division, the wing, and Force Logistic Command. Other officers designated for assignment to the MAB staff could participate in the planning as required. Simmons proposed that the tasks of the staff include preparation of MAB operational and administrative plans, review of the brigade's communications requirements, preliminary planning for the Increment VII redeployments, and preparation for activation of the MAB Headquarters and Headquarters Company and for the physical establishment of the MAB command post.[10]

III MAF accepted Brigadier General Simmon's proposal and on 27 February ordered activation of a

*The 3d MAB had been previously activated on 7 May 1965 when it was landed at Chu Lai with a mission of occupying the terrain necessary to construct an expeditionary airfield. Commanded by Brigadier General Marion E. Carl, it consisted of RLT 4 (Colonel Edward P. Dupras, Jr.), the advance elements of MAG-12 (Colonel John D. Noble), and Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 10 (Commander John M. Bannister, CEC, USN).

3d MAB planning staff on 1 March. The planning staff immediately began work, its deliberations supplemented by occasional conferences to coordinate the interests of the major commands. By 10 March, the schedule for forming the brigade headquarters had taken shape. Officers of the MAF, division, and wing assigned to the brigade were to be available for part-time work on MAB matters between 10 March and 13 April. Between 3 and 13 April, the 3d MAB staff would begin moving into the 1st Marine Division CP, which had been established as the site for the brigade CP. The MAF, division, and wing headquarters were to continue their normal operations until activation of the brigade on 14 April, but beginning around 7 April, the MAF and wing would relocate key staff functions and personnel to the division CP.[11]

On 15 March Lieutenant General Jones, confirming what he had indicated in his 5 February message to Robertson, appointed Major General Alan J. Armstrong to command the brigade. Armstrong, a native of Nebraska, had been a Marine aviator since 1941. A World War II veteran, Armstrong had come to Vietnam in June 1970 to command the 1st MAW, after completing a tour as Director of the Marine Corps Development Center at Quantico. In selecting Armstrong to command the brigade, HQMC and FMFPac set aside Brigadier General Simmons, who had been the initial designee for the assignment. This decision resulted from continuing concern that a one-star general might be at a disadvantage in dealing with the other Services and other Service commands, especially the Seventh Air Force. Also, the Marines expected air operations to continue longer than ground operations under brigade control. They also thought aviation redeployment problems would be a principal concern of the MAB commander. Hence Armstrong was selected as brigade commander, with Brigadier General Simmons reassigned as his deputy.[12]

The brigade staff now took final shape. As early as July of the previous year, Marine planners had developed a list of MAB Headquarters billets and had decided which of them should be filled from the MAF, division, wing, and FLC staffs. Assignment of particular officers to jobs had begun late in 1970 and was largely completed by mid-March. In making these assignments, the planners emphasized continuity in key positions. According to General Simmons, "The function performed by the Headquarters, III Marine Amphibious Force, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, and 1st Marine Division were all telescoped together, reduced in scale, and in most cases continued to be performed by the same persons who had had the job all along." For example, four officers from the division FSCC remained in the MAB FSCC. The organizers of the MAB staff often disregarded the usual practice of automatically redeploying Marines with the least time remaining in their Southeast Asia tours. Major General Armstrong declared:

> . . . This business of continuity – that's the reason it worked. We got some criticism . . . because they didn't put the right R[otation] T[our] D[ates] in the billets that would make the MAB come out even and the people all go home. . . . That's again the numbers business waggin' the operational dog. We put . . . the people . . . in there because they were people that were considered essential for the jobs, and that's why it went so well . . . .[13]

The 3d MAB planning staff, in conjunction with representatives of the MAF, division, wing, and FLC, revised and refined the schedules previously drawn up for redeployment of the brigade. By 22 March, carrying out General Abram's 17 February directive to prepare for another withdrawal between 1 May and 30 June, the Marines had drafted a timetable under which the infantry and artillery units of the MAB would stand down between mid-April and mid-May. The aviation and support elements were to cease operations during late May and early June.[14]

Establishment of the 3d MAB Headquarters went forward on schedule. By 24 March, the Marines who were to operate the brigade communications center were in position at the division CP. Most of the equipment, facilities, and personnel to operate the MAB communications center came from Communication Support Company, 7th Communication Battalion. Early in April, the officers and enlisted men assigned to the various MAB staff sections began moving into the offices of their counterpart division staff sections. Many entire headquarters elements became part of the MAB staff. The III MAF G-4 section, for example, transferred its real estate management, equipment redistribution, ordnance, and embarkation offices intact to 3d MAB Headquarters. On 8 April, the brigade staff took charge of conducting the daily operations briefing for General Robertson; on the same day, the 1st MAW began directing tactical air operations from the division command post.[15]

As the MAB Headquarters was taking shape, President Nixon on 7 April announced the long-expected new troop withdrawal which was to end the brigade's short operational life. Declaring to the American peo-

ple that "The American involvement in Vietnam is coming to an end," Nixon directed the removal of another 100,000 U.S. military personnel from Vietnam by 1 December 1971, an action which would reduce the total number of Americans in the country to 184,000. Under JCS instructions, MACV promptly issued orders to execute the first increment of the new withdrawal, codenamed Keystone Oriole Alpha. As previously planned, Keystone Oriole Alpha was to involve 29,000 men, including all of the 3d MAB.

III MAF began implementing the MAB redeployment plan developed during March, actually initiating the Keystone Oriole Alpha withdrawal before all the units in Keystone Robin Charlie had left Vietnam. On 13 April the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines ceased combat operations and moved to Hill 34 to prepare for embarkation. The same day, Battery A, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines stood down at Hill 65 and displaced to the Northern Artillery Cantonment, while the 2d CAG deactivated CACOs 2-1 and 2-2, with a total of 10 CAPs. The CAG now had only three CACOs still in operation.[16]

On the 12th and 13th, the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines redistributed its forces to fill in for the 1st Battalion. Company E of the 2d Battalion occupied Hill 10, just northeast of the foot of Charlie Ridge. A platoon of Company F, heavily reinforced with machine gun and mortar detachments and accompanied by an artillery forward observer and a forward air controller, took position on Hill 785, about five miles northeast of Thuong Duc. This platoon was to protect a patrol base for reconnaissance teams involved in Operation Imperial Lake. Company G sent a platoon to hold Hill 270, an artillery position in the foothills west of Hill 10. The rest of the 2d Battalion, which was scheduled to be the last operational Marine infantry battalion in Vietnam, continued operations south of Da Nang and on Division Ridge.[17]

On 14 April, with all sections of the brigade staff in position and functioning, Lieutenant General Robertson officially activated the 3d Marine Amphibious Brigade during a ceremony at Camp Jay K. Books, the Force Logistic Command compound northwest of Da Nang. At the same time, Major General Armstrong assumed command of the MAB, to which Robertson assigned all III MAF units remaining in Vietnam. The ceremony, attended by over 100 high-ranking U.S. and South Vietnamese guests, included a parade by units representing the MAF, division, wing, and FLC and a fly-over by 16 1st MAW aircraft. In his brief remarks before the troops passed in review, Robertson paid tribute to the Marines of III MAF. "Results of our combined efforts," he said, "surround us in the security in the hillsides, construction of buildings and prosperity of the people. . . . I am proud to have been a partner in that effort."[18]

Following the ceremony, Robertson, with his staff and the III MAF flag, boarded a plane for Okinawa, where he was to reestablish force headquarters. Major General Widdecke left for Camp Pendleton the same day, stopping enroute for a debrief at FMFPac in Camp Smith, Hawaii. General Widdecke's arrival in Camp Pendleton was preceded by his chief of staff, Colonel Don B. Blanchard, who traveled on a separate aircraft with the division colors. Colonel Blanchard had also served with the 1st Marine Division at Guadalcanal as a corporal and in Korea as a captain.[19] The 1st MAW staff took the wing colors to Iwakuni, where the 1st MAW (Rear), the nucleus of the new wing headquarters, was located.* For each command, the removal of its colors from Vietnam signalled the formal end of its war service.

With the departure of the colors on 14 April, almost six years of war ended for the III Marine Amphibious Force. Activated at Da Nang on 7 May 1965 to command the 3d Marine Division and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, the force had grown with the expanding American involvement in the war until it reached a 1968 peak strength of over 150,000 Marine, Army, and Navy personnel, in two reinforced Marine divisions, a Marine aircraft wing, and two Army divisions. III MAF had been one of the largest Marine combat commands ever established and had directed most of the American war effort in northern South Vietnam. Now it would revert to the MAF role of directing the Marine ready forces in the Western Pacific.

The 3d Marine Amphibious Brigade began its brief existence with a total strength of 1,322 Marine and 124 Navy officers and 13,359 Marine and 711 Navy enlisted men. Its infantry element consisted of Colonel Kelley's 1st Marines, the 1st Battalion of which already had stood down. The 1st Battalion, 11th Marines and the 3d 8-inch Howitzer Battery constituted the brigade artillery. Company A (Rein), 1st Reconnaissance Battalion furnished long-range patrol capability. The 1st

*Although 1st MAW elements served in Vietnam since 1962, the wing headquarters did not move to Da Nang until 1965. The 1st MAW then evolved into the largest wing in Marine history, including fixed-wing and helicopter squadrons, and air control assets for air defense and air-ground coordination.

Department of the Defense Photo (USMC) A800147

LtGen Donn J. Robertson, Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force, says farewell to LtGen Hoang Xung Lam, Commanding General, Military Region 1. LtGen Robertson and his staff departed Vietnam on 14 April and moved his "flag" to Okinawa.

Military Police Battalion remained to protect the Da Nang Vital Area, and the 2d CAG continued its hamlet security efforts. Supporting units of the brigade included a Communication Support Company from the 7th Communication Battalion and one reinforced company each from the 1st Medical Battalion, 1st Motor Transport Battalion, 1st Shore Party Battalion, and the 1st and 7th Engineer Battalions. In Brigadier General James R. Jones's Force Logistic Command, the flag of the 1st Force Service Regiment had been moved to Camp Pendleton in Keystone Robin Charlie. FLC now had separate headquarters, supply, and maintenance battalions under its command.

The brigade aviation element, the organization of which had been the subject of so much debate during the long planning process, consisted of two aircraft groups. MAG-11, under Colonel Albert C. Pommerenk, included VMA-311, VMA(AW)-225, and a detachment of OV-10s under H&MS-11. Colonel Lewis C. Street III's MAG-16 consisted of HMH-463, HMLs -167 and -367, and HMMs -262 and -263. This disproportionately large helicopter complement resulted from the redeployment postponements caused by Lam Son 719. Air operations were now controlled by the aviation section of the MAB staff, with tactical air support directed by a direct air support center (DASC)* located at the brigade CP.[20]

Brigade operations began with additional reductions and stand-downs. On 15 April, the last four CUPP squads of the 1st Marines, which had been protecting hamlets just north of Hill 55, was deactivated, concluding the Combined Unit Pacification Program. Between 20 April and the end of the month, VMA(AW)-225, one of MAG-11's two fixed-wing squadrons, ceased combat operations and redeployed to MCAS El Toro.[21]

The remaining two active infantry battalions of the

*This DASC also discharged the functions of the Tactical Air Direction Center (TADC). See Chapter 15.

1st Marines continued saturation patrolling within their TAOIs. The 2d Battalion, besides operating south of Da Nang and around Hill 10, kept platoons on Hills 785 and 270 and coordinated the defense of Division (now Brigade) Ridge by the units stationed there. The 3d Battalion used one of its companies in rotation as regimental reserve and quick reaction force and kept the other three in the field north and northwest of Da Nang. Marines of both battalions had few contacts with the enemy. Those that did occur, following the by now usual pattern, were brief exchanges of fire with small Communist groups that showed no disposition to stand and fight. Reconnaissance teams scouted Charlie Ridge and Elephant Valley, sighting a few enemy but experiencing no combat. The 2d CAG, with its remaining three CACOs operating in Dien Ban, Hieu Nhon, and Hoa Vang Districts close in around Da Nang, also reported only light contact.[22]

The brigade artillery unit, the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, had only two 105mm batteries, Battery B on Hill 55 and Battery C at the Northern Artillery Cantonment (NAC). Battery C also maintained a two-howitzer detachment on Hill 270. Each 105mm howitzer battery had an attached platoon of two 155mm howitzers. The 107mm mortar battery was located at the Northern Artillery Cantonment, and the 3d 8-inch Howitzer Battery had two platoons deployed at the NAC and a third on Hill 55. Battery D, 1st Battalion, 82d U.S. Artillery on Hill 65 remained under operational control of the Marine artillery battalion until 16 April, when it passed to XXIV Corps Artillery control.

Between 14 and 30 April, these artillery units fired 1,229 missions in the 3d MAB TAOI, expending 3,869 rounds. Many of these missions were fired at a suspected enemy rocket storage site near La Bong village, about five miles southwest of Da Nang. This village lay in a swampy area along the banks of the Yen River, a small river often used by the Communists to move rockets into firing range of the city and airbase. On 22 and 23 April and again on the 25th and the 26th, Company H, 2d Battalion, 1st Marines directed fire into the La Bong area, causing 42 major and 139 minor secondary explosions.[23]

During the MAB's first two weeks of operation, the ARVN and the U.S. Army took over the defense of most of Quang Nam. All four of the 51st ARVN Regiment's battalions were in the field southwest of the Marines, sweeping enemy-infested areas around Hill 55, An Hoa, and in the Arizona Territory. Regional and Popular Forces assumed a steadily increasing share of responsibility for patrolling the pacified and semi-pacified portions of the province. The South Vietnamese, both regulars, RFs and PFs, encountered substantial action, reporting 435 enemy killed, 200 VC suspects seized, and 152 weapons captured during March and April.[24]

The U.S. Army presence in Quang Nam expanded rapidly. By 14 April, Battery D, 1st Battalion, 82d U.S. Artillery had relieved the 1st Marines as the command responsible for defense of Hill 65. In preparation for the 1 May Army takeover of most of Quang Nam, the 3d MAB and the 196th Brigade agreed on 21 April that the Army brigade would begin operations on Charlie Ridge immediately and that on the 27th, an Army battalion would deploy in a two-and-one-half-square-mile area around Hill 350 in the northwestern part of the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines TAOI.

Carrying out this agreement, on 21-22 April, the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines removed its platoons from Hills 785 and 270, and the howitzer detachment displaced from Hill 270 to NAC. Elements of the 1st Battalion, 46th U.S. Infantry immediately occupied Hill 270. On the 27th, the 4th Battalion, 31st U.S. Infantry began moving onto Hill 350. Two days later, the 196th Brigade assumed responsibility for all of Quang Nam Province north of the Vu Gia and Thu Bon Rivers and west of a north-south line about 10 miles west of Da Nang.[25]

While the combat units of the 196th Brigade deployed in the field, the rear elements of the infantry battalions and the artillery, headquarters, and support units began moving into Marine cantonments on Brigade Ridge. Between 21 and 30 April, the Army took possession of the camps of the 1st Medical Battalion and the 11th Motor Transport Battalion, the former 11th Marines CP, the old 1st Reconnaissance Battalion base at Camp Reasoner, and the 1st Marines headquarters compound at Camp Perdue. Marines continued to occupy portions of these installations, but now as tenants in Army-controlled facilities. All formerly Marine-established and occupied facilities for which no tenant, U.S. Army or RVNAF, was available or which were of no lasting "military or economic value" were dismantled to avoid the requirement to garrison them with security forces.[26]

As the allies carried out these troop redeployments, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong opened Phase Two of their K-850 offensive on 26 April, with another surge of rocket, mortar, and small ground attacks

throughout Quang Nam. In spite of the Marines' preemptive shelling of the La Bong storage area, the Communists fired nine rockets at Da Nang Air Base and Marble Mountain in the small hours of the 26th, wounding seven soldiers. At the same time, the NVA and VC hit Dien Ban District Headquarters with a 60-round mortar barrage which killed one civilian, wounded another, and destroyed a number of homes. At 0210 on the 27th, the enemy fired four more 122mm rockets at Da Nang airfield. These rockets ignited two fuel storage tanks, and over 500,000 gallons of jet fuel and aviation gasoline went up in flames. With the exception of the rocket attacks, the Communists continued to direct most of their attention to South Vietnamese units and installations while avoiding American positions. According to the 3d MAB intelligence staff, the second surge of the K-850 offensive "did not reach the levels planned due to coordination and logistic problems, resulting in a low level of activity throughout the province."[27]

The Communists had more success with terrorism and political agitation, which they intensified in connection with the offensive. On 25 April, for instance, 15 Viet Cong entered Kim Lien, a valley in the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines TAOI where the battalion had conducted intensive pacification operations. The guerrillas killed the hamlet chief and five people's self defense force members and wounded three other PSDF troops before withdrawing. On the night of 26-27 April, about 60 NVA and VC invaded two hamlets of Hoa Vinh Village, just south of the Cau Do River, collected rice and money, and held propaganda meetings. The enemy attempted the same kind of incursion at Hoa Thanh, another village in the 3d Battalion's TAOI, but there Popular Force troops repelled the intruders.[28]

Unaffected by the Communist offensive, the 196th Brigade continued its movement into Quang Nam and by 30 April had deployed three of its four infantry battalions in the province. All four companies of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry were patrolling around Hill 350. The 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry had established its command post on Hill 270 and was maneuvering its companies on western Charlie Ridge. The 3d Battalion, 21st Infantry continued to sweep the Que Sons from its base on Hill 510. The brigade's remaining infantry battalion, the 2d of the 1st U.S. Infantry occupied Hill 65 with one company. Another company was in the field northeast of An Hoa, while the rest of the battalion completed preparations to leave its former TAOI in Quang Tin. As planned, all of the 196th Brigade was moving into the mountains west and southwest of Da Nang, leaving protection of the lowlands to the ARVN, the RFs and PFs, and the remaining Marines.[29]

With Army troops moving into position on the edges of the 3d MAB TAOI and the enemy avoiding Marine units, 3d MAB operations resulted in few casualties on either side. Between 14 and 30 April, the brigade killed only 22 Viet Cong and captured 10 individual weapons. With Marine units of 3d MAB moving progressively into a stand-down posture during April, patrol activities numbered just over 2,000 where as in February, with more ground combat units available and patrolling more intensely, more than 6,000 were recorded.[30] Reflecting the decline in activity, Marine casualties in the same period amounted to two dead and 45 wounded.

The two aircraft groups of the MAB kept up the tempo of operations. Even with VMA(AW)-225 standing down on the 20th, jets of MAG-11 flew 436 sorties in the last two weeks of April. They conducted 44 of these in support of Imperial Lake and most of the rest for other Marine operations in Quang Nam and U.S. Army and ARVN offensives elsewhere in Military Region 1. MAG-16's helicopters completed 10,473 sorties in the same period, carrying 1,064 tons of cargo and 12,154 passengers.[31]

The End of Keystone Robin Charlie

During the last days of April, the remaining Marines scheduled for Keystone Robin Charlie embarked. Between 14 and 25 April, the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines; the 1st Medical Battalion (-); the 11th Motor Transport Battalion; and the Headquarters Battalion (-), 1st Marine Division left Da Nang by ship and plane. The surface embarkation, coordinated by the Army Port Authority, proceeded well enough but not without a problem or two. The staging areas for unit equipment to be reloaded were selected to conform with the anticipated piers where ships for dedicated units were supposed to tie up. When the ships arrived, however, recalled Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Wehrle, commanding officer of Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division:

> It appeared almost as if it was a random selection by the pilot as to which pier he put the ship on. There was no match up between the staging area at the head of the pier and the ship that was on the pier. As a consequence, we had a tremendous cross traffic of material handling equipment at-

tempting to move gear from a staging area to its respective ships.*

Wehrle said that the ships could have been backed out into the stream but then, "we would probably have had some irate Navy captains on our hands if that requirement would have been established. And they were trying to meet sailing deadlines also." Wehrle concluded that "our greatest salvation was that it was an administrative load and not a combat load."[32]

During the same period, Marine Wing Headquarters Group (MWHG) 11, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadrons (H&HSs) 1 (-) and 18 (-), Marine Wing Facilities Squadron (MWFS) 1, and Marine Wing Communications Squadron (MWCS) 1, left for Japan. The last of 12 embarkation units of men and equipment being redeployed by sea sailed from Da Nang on 23-24 April in four amphibious ships.** By the 30 April deadline, the III MAF/3d MAB part of this redeployment phase had been concluded; 11,911 more Marine and Navy officers and men and 383,494 cubic feet of cargo had been moved out of Vietnam.[33]

As if to furnish a dramatic ending for Keystone Robin Charlie, on 30 April President Nixon welcomed the 1st Marine Division home during an elaborate ceremony at Camp Pendleton. The President; his daughter Tricia Nixon; Undersecretary of the Navy John W. Warner; Admiral John S. McCain, CinCPac; and Admiral Bernard A. Clarey, Commander-in-Chief Pacific Fleet (ComPacFlt), were present at this special review. The Commandant, General Leonard F. Chapman, Jr.; Lieutenant General Jones, CGFMFPac; and Major General George S. Bowman, Jr., Commanding General, Camp Pendleton, attended for the Marine Corps. Major General Widdecke, his staff, and the commander, staff, colors, and a ceremonial platoon from each regiment and battalion, including those still in Vietnam, represented the 1st Division. The 1st Marines was represented by a platoon from the 3d Marines, and the 5th Marines' ceremonial unit was composed partly of men from the 7th Marines.

Before a crowd of 15,000 cheering Marines, Marine families, and local school children bused in for the occasion, the President presented the 1st Marine Division with its second Presidential Unit Citation for Vietnam service, the eighth PUC to be received by the division. In his remarks to the division, Nixon declared:

> As I welcome you home, I say to you that the Nation is proud of you. I can say to you, you come home mission accomplished . . . . Certainly in terms of personal heroism there is no question about the verdict of history.[34]

After Nixon's speech, the ceremonial units from the division passed in review as aircraft from the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing flew overhead. Later on the 30th, at a separate ceremony, Major General Widdecke, who had led the division throughout its last year of combat in Vietnam, turned over command to his ADC, Brigadier General Ross T. Dwyer, and prepared to assume command of I MAF, headquartered at Pendleton, which controlled Marine air and ground units on the west coast. The 1st Marine Division, most units of which had returned from Vietnam at much reduced strength, now would begin rebuilding and reestablishing combat readiness.[35]

Keystone Oriole Alpha: The Final Stand-Down

On 1 May, the 3d Marine Amphibious Brigade began its last week of ground operations in Vietnam, and the next-to-last phase of its withdrawal from combat and turnover of Quang Nam to the 196th Brigade. The 3d Battalion, 1st Marines stood down on the 1st and moved with three of its companies to Camp 14 on Brigade Ridge to prepare for embarkation. The 1st Marines Headquarters ceased operations that same day, transferring direction of air and artillery support for its remaining infantry in the field to the headquarters of the 2d Battalion. Also on 1 May, Battery C and the Mortar Battery of the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines ended operations at the Northern Artillery Cantonment, although two 155mm howitzers of Battery C continued to conduct fire missions for another week. The 3d 8-inch Howitzer Battery stood down and withdrew its platoon from Hill 55 to Camp Faulkner near Marble Mountain. Company A (Rein), 1st Reconnaissance Battalion ended tactical operations on the 1st, but was to remain active until its previously scheduled stand-down date of 7 May. On 1 May, the 2d CAG deactivated CACOs 2-4 and 2-7, with 10 combined action platoons; only CACO 2-3, with six CAPs, now was left in the field. MAG-16's HMM-263 stood down and began preparing its CH-46s and equipment for embarkation.[36]

As these units ceased operations, the 196th Brigade extended its TAOI to cover all of Quang Nam outside the boundaries of Hoa Vang District. The Army brigade's attached armored cavalry squadron, the 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry began operations in the

*For details on embarkation see Chapter 19.

**USS *Cleveland* (LPD 7), USS *Anchorage* (LSD 36), USS *Fresno* (LST 1182), and USS *Durham* (LKA 114).

province on the 1st. Its CP was at Camp Faulkner and two troops, A and B, were in the field near the Thu Bon River.[37]

Within Hoa Vang District, Lieutenant Colonel Roy E. Moss's 2d Battalion, 1st Marines reshuffled its companies to prorect Brigade Ridge and continue saturation patrolling of the small portion of the Rocket Belt left to the Marines. The battalion had six rifle companies under its control, its own four organic companies, a provisional Brigade Ridge defense company drawn from its headquarters and rear elements, and Company K of the 3d Battalion. The 1st Military Police Battalion continued to protect Da Nang airfield. Outside the 3d MAB TAOI, the six CAPs of CACO 2-3 guarded hamlets in Dien Ban District; and Battery B, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines stayed in position on Hill 55. This battery, reinforced by the 155mm howitzer platoon of Battery C at NAC, now provided all of the MAB's artillery support.

The last week of ground operations went quietly for the Marines. The 2d Battalion and the 1st MP Battalion conducted 117 small-unit patrols and 129 squad ambushes between 1 and 7 May, with no enemy contact and no encounters with boobytraps. CACO 2-3 also had a relatively uneventful week, reporting a few minor enemy attacks by fire. MAG-11, with only VMA-311 still operational, flew 80 sorties and dropped 128.7 tons of ordnance during the week, while helicopters of MAG-16 flew 3,691 sorties and carried 5,691 tons of cargo and 6,563 passengers.[38]

During the first days of May, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong continued Phase Two of their K-850 Campaign. Their pressure on South Vietnamese forces reached a climax on the 2d and 3d, when at least 200 men, later identified as members of the *38th NVA Regiment* and the *Q-83d Viet Cong Battalion*, launched a series of mortar and ground attacks on RF and PF positions in Dai Loc District, southwest of Da Nang. In the heaviest of these assaults, at 0245 on the 2d, a reinforced company of VC infantry and sappers stormed Dai Loc District Headquarters near Hill 37 behind a mortar and rocket barrage. The Communists managed to blow up a bridge and an ammunition dump, but were driven off by Regional Force troops. In the fight at the district headquarters and in other small engagements, the Dai Loc Regional and Popular Forces, almost all of whom had been trained by Marine combined action units, gave a good account of themselves. Fighting largely without U.S. air support, which was hampered by cloudy weather, the RFs and PFs in two days killed 95 Communists and captured 43 individual and crew-served weapons, at a cost of 15 dead and 43 wounded. This success, and other minor RF and PF victories throughout the province during the spring, appeared to vindicate the Marines' long, patient effort to improve the once-neglected local forces.[39]

Occasional rocket attacks reminded 3d MAB Marines of the continuing Communist offensive. On 3 May, eight rockets landed on Hill 55, destroying an ARVN bunker and killing one South Vietnamese soldier and wounding five others and one U.S. Marine. The enemy fired two rocket salvos at Da Nang Airbase on the 5th, three missiles at 0400 and six more at 2300. Most of the rockets overshot the airfield and exploded in Da Nang City, where they killed six Vietnamese civilians and injured six others and three ARVN soldiers.[40] The overall impact of enemy attacks was negligible and seemed to demonstrate the VC/NVA reluctance to do more than harass the withdrawing Marines, knowing that with the Marine removal from the Da Nang TAOR remaining allied targets would be potentially more lucrative.

During the first week of May, the last week of combat operations, the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Raymond G. Davis, who was visiting Vietnam, accepted an invitation from Lieutenant Colonel Roy E. Moss, commander of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, to stop for lunch with Company F which was to be the last combat unit of the battalion withdrawn from operations. Moss recalled:

> General Davis accepted this offer and arrived at the 2d Battalion command post about 1130 and we then flew to Foxtrot's company position a few miles south of Hill 34. Capt Mark [T.] Hehnen, the Foxtrot Company commander, had been alerted to these plans and had a lunch of "C" rations and hamburger patties waiting upon our arrival. Of course, Captain Hehnen had ensured tight security around the area and, for about one-half hour, General Davis, Lieutenant Colonel C. [Clyde] D. Dean and myself, and a few members of the company had lunch and an interesting conversation with the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps. Needless to say, we didn't carry on too long and, after we finished chatting, boarded helicopters back to the 2d Battalion CP where I departed and General Davis continued on his planned itinerary.[41]

On 7 May, all units of the 3d MAB ceased combat operations. The 2d Battalion, 1st Marines turned defense of Brigade Ridge over to two companies from the 196th Brigade and withdrew to Hill 34 to stand down. At noon of the previous day, Lieutenant Colonel Bruce F. Ogden, commander of the 1st Battalion, 11th

Marines fired the last Marine artillery round of the war from one of the 155mm howitzers of Battery C at the NAC. On the 7th, Battery B, and the 1st Battalion Headquarters Battery stood down; and Battery B displaced from Hill 55 to Camp Books to prepare for embarkation and the transfer of its weapons to the Vietnamese Marine Corps. That same day, the 2d Combined Action Group deactivated its last CACO, 2-3. The 1st Military Police Battalion turned over defense of Da Nang Airbase to the 104th Regional Force Battalion and the 796th RF Company, but, unlike most of the 3d MAB units ceasing operations on 7 May, the MP battalion remained active. It deployed companies to protect the Force Logistic Command installations where the other Marine organizations were standing down.[42]

At 1200 on the 7th, the 3d MAB terminated Operation Imperial Lake. This operation, which had begun in the Que Sons on 1 September of the previous year, eventually had involved elements of all three regiments of the 1st Marine Division. In the final days of operations in Quang Nam, it had been extended to cover all patrol and ambush activity. In almost nine months, Marines in Imperial Lake had killed 126 North Vietnamese and 179 Viet Cong and captured 215 individual and 16 crew-served weapons, while losing 24 Marines and two Navy corpsmen killed and 170 Marines and three corpsmen wounded. The conclusion of this long running search and destroy operation graphically demonstrated that, for Marines, the ground war in Vietnam was over.[43]

Marine fixed-wing aviation operations also ended on 7 May. After flying a final 14 sorties over Laos in support of the Seventh Air Force, VMA-311 stood down, as did H&MS-11's detachment of OV-10As. HMM-262 stood down on the 7th, but the other helicopter squadrons of MAG-16 remained operational for noncombat missions.[44]

With Marine combat operations at an end, on the 7th the 196th Brigade enlarged its TAOI again to include Hoa Vang District and Da Nang Airbase and city. The Army brigade also took possession of the former 1st Marine Division command post, with 3d MAB Headquarters sharing the facility. The remaining infantry battalion of the 196th Brigade, the 2d Battalion, 1st U.S. Infantry completed its displacement northward from Quang Tin. By 8 May, this battalion had set up its CP on Hill 151, named LZ Chloe by the Army, about four miles east of An Hoa in the northern foothills of the Que Sons. One company of the 2d Battalion continued to garrison Hill 65, another was located at Da Nang, and the remaining two were in the field near Hill 151.[45]

The 1st Marines was the last of eight Marine infantry regiments to leave Vietnam. The last detachment of the regiment's 1st Battalion, which had stood down on 13 April, left Da Nang on 3 May. By the 13th, the regimental headquarters company and the 3d Battalion were on their way to the United States. The regiment had entered Vietnam in 1965 and 1966, with one battalion landing at each of the then three major Marine enclaves: Chu Lai, Hue/Phu Bai, and Da Nang. In the next six years, the 1st Marines had taken part in over 50 operations, including the battle of Hue during the 1968 Communist Tet offensive. Late that same year, the regiment had moved to Quang Nam, participating in Operation Meade Rivet, one of the largest Marine helicopter assaults of the war, in which over 1,000 VC/NVA were killed and 299 captured. The regiment spent the next two and one-half years before its withdrawal rooting the enemy out of Quang Nam Province.[46]

The 1st Battalion, 11th Marines also quickly redeployed. Battery A of the battalion had embarked for Camp Pendleton on 1 May. On the 10th, Headquarters Battery, Battery C, and the Mortar Battery moved to Camp Books from the Northern Artillery Cantonment, which was then transferred to the ARVN. Three days later, the battalion command group and the colors boarded a plane for the United States, while other personnel and equipment of Headquarters Battery, Battery C, and the Mortar Battery left Da Nang on board the USS *Ogden* (LPD 5).[47]

Still other ground and air units of the MAB left Vietnam in the week after the termination of offensive operations. Between 10 and 13 May, Company A (Reinforced), 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, redeployed to Camp Pendleton. VMA-311 flew its planes to Iwakuni on the 12th, and the following day HMMs -262 and -263 completed embarkation, respectively for Hawaii and Quantico. These early departures were in accord with Lieutenant General Robertson's view that "when the time comes to withdraw from an area like that, keep active up to the last minute, then roll up and get the devil out."[48]

By 14 May, the units of 3d MAB still in Vietnam were all in the positions they would occupy until they redeployed. The two aircraft groups remained at the airfields from which they had operated, MAG-11 at Da Nang Airbase and MAG-16 at Marble Mountain.

On Hill 34, the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines and the 3d 8-inch Howitzer Battery, which had moved from Camp Faulkner, were completing embarkation preparations. Battery B, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines and the engineer, shore party, and motor transport companies of the 3d MAB all were at Camp Books. Company A, 1st Medical Battalion remained at the battalion's former cantonment on Brigade Ridge. The 1st MP Battalion Headquarters was at Camp Stokes near Da Nang airfield. The Force Logistic Command continued to operate embarkation facilities at Camp Haskins on Red Beach. All of these organizations, aided by the MPs, provided protection for their camps, but beyond their perimeters the ground was controlled by the Quang Nam Regional and Popular Forces, the ARVN, and the 196th Brigade.[49]

As unit after unit stood down and redeployed, Marine civic action came to an end. Most organizations continued their efforts in this field until late in the process of preparing to redeploy, concentrating on providing material for village self-help projects and conducting frequent MedCaps. They tried to finish long-term construction and other projects before they departed. After its activation, the 3d MAB continued spending public and private civic action funds that the MAF, division, and wing had left behind. The brigade used a large portion of this money to buy building, plumbing, and electrical supplies for the Quang Tri Child Care Center, the former 3d Marine Division Memorial Children's Hospital, which was now nearing completion.

Two ceremonies in mid-May signalled the end of the long, often frustrating, and occasionally rewarding Marine pacification and civic action campaign. On 11 May, the 2d Combined Action Group Headquarters departed its compound near Hoi An, after a farewell parade and a speech of gratitude and good wishes from Colonel Le Tri Tin, the Quang Nam Province Chief. Three days later, at Quang Tri, Major General Armstrong participated in the dedication of the Child Care Center, a combined orphanage, maternity clinic, and secondary school dormitory. By the end of May, the brigade could report, "3d MAB civic action program terminated."[50]

During the final weeks of May, the two Marine aircraft groups ceased operations and turned their facilities over to the U.S. Air Force and the Army. Both of the MAG-11 jet squadrons had redeployed during the first part of the month. On 19 May, the ground elements of the group, H&MS-11 and MABS-11, ceased operations. Two days later, Colonel Pommerenk transferred control of the MAG-11 area on the west side of Da Nang airfield to the Air Force, although units of MAG-11 remained until early June completing embarkation preparations.

At Marble Mountain, HMH-463 stood down on 18 May. Eight days later, HMLs -167 and -367 ended operations, as did H&MS-16 and MABS-16. Two Hueys of HML-167 remained operational until 15 June to support the MAB headquarters, but the rest of the helicopter group concentrated on readying equipment and aircraft for embarkation. On 1 June, Colonel Street turned possession of Marble Mountain Air Facility over to the Army's 11th Combat Aviation Group.[51]

While the aircraft groups completed their standdown procedures, most of the remaining infantry and artillery of the 3d MAB left Vietnam. On 19 May, Lieutenant Colonel Moss, the command group, and the colors of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines boarded a plane for Camp Pendleton. The rest of the battalion followed in several detachments. On 1 June, the last 186 officers and men of the last Marine infantry battalion in Vietnam left Da Nang on board the USS *Denver* (LPD 9). The 3d 8-inch Howitzer Battery had embarked on 24 May, and Battery B, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines also went out on the *Denver* on 1 June.[52]

With its ground combat and combat support units gone, the 3d MAB rapidly wound up its activities. On 4 June, as General Armstrong put it, the Marine Corps "went out of the real estate business" in Vietnam with the turnover of the last 3d MAB cantonment, Camp Books, to the Army. Force Logistic Command continued using Camp Books and the Retrograde Facility at Red Beach, turned over earlier to the ARVN 1st Area Logistic Command, to prepare material for embarkation. With no more Marine controlled installations to protect, the 1st Military Police Battalion stood down on 7 June. The MPs and the remaining aviation, engineer, and medical units redeployed during the next three weeks. FLC, which assisted these last departing organizations, finished loading Marine supplies and equipment. The FLC redeployed in several detachments.[53]

Occasional enemy rocket attacks continued during the final weeks of logistic activity. According to Armstrong, an afternoon salvo on 5 June:

> . . . jolted everyone. We had convinced ourselves they only did that at night. We were fortunate . . . . MAG-11 lost a utility shed about 100 feet from Colonel Al Pommerenk's . . . quarters. He had a good scare and shakeup. With three

> days to go [before redeployment] he is at the nervous stage anyhow.[54]

On 25 June, the concluding seaborne embarkation unit of Keystone Oriole Alpha sailed from Da Nang on the USS *Saint Louis* (LKA 116). Two days later, Force Logistic Command Headquarters was deactivated, completing a redeployment which had involved 13,497 Marine officers and men, most of whom were moved by air; 489,927 cubic feet of cargo; and 408,295 square feet of deck space of vehicles.*[55]

Under plans completed late in May, the last 3d MAB Marines to leave Da Nang were to be Major General Armstrong and 10-12 members of the brigade staff. They were to fly to FMFPac Headquarters at Camp Smith, Hawaii, on 26 and 27 June. The MAB would be deactivated as this final staff element left Vietnam, but the remainder of the staff were to spend a few more days together at Camp Smith to finish last-minute MAB business.

Armstrong and his staff left Da Nang on schedule, after a hectic, uncomfortable month of coping with the myriad final details of redeployment while their facilities were being dismantled around them. According to Armstrong:

> It got damn miserable towards the end. [During] the last couple of weeks, after . . . we pulled out telephones out of places like . . . FLC, we lost all telephone communications. We couldn't even talk between the old division CP area and FLC. If we . . . had to get a message over, we had to send a vehicle, back and forth. We couldn't talk to Marble Mountain; we couldn't talk to the Deep Water Pier. Local communications [were] just awful . . . especially after you put most of your vehicles on the boat . . . .[56]

Other systems also deteriorated toward the end, including the water supply. Armstrong noted that "not having water for indoor plumbing is not necessarily a hardship, but it sure as hell is if you don't have any outdoor heads."[57]

On 25 June, two days before their scheduled departure, the 3d MAB staff received "a great big sheaf of messages, dating all the way back to the 1st of June," from the communications station at Korat, Thailand. An equipment failure at the station had prevented prompt transmission of these messages, most of which dealt with personnel matters and disposition of Marines' personal effects. General Armstrong recalled:

> We just never got the messages, so there [was] a lot of undone business floating around. We got copies of all those, and on the . . . morning of the day we left, we got a "We're so sorry" from the station over at Korat, that they were putting all these messages out, hoping that they'd be duplicates. Well, we found that most of 'em weren't duplicates; we'd just never gotten the traffic . . . .[58]

The MAB staff had to take the messages with them to Hawaii, where they would deal with them along with the other remaining MAB business.

In spite of these last-minute difficulties, 3d Marine Amphibious Brigade Headquarters closed down on 26 June. That day, Major General Armstrong, with 10 members of his staff, 53 other MAB Marines, and about 2,000 pounds of records and files, including the messages from Korat, boarded a Marine KC-130F tanker for the flight to Okinawa, the first leg of their trip to Hawaii. The following day, 3d MAB was formally deactivated. As planned, Armstrong and his staff cleared up final details of brigade affairs at Camp Smith. By early July, all had scattered to new assignments, Armstrong himself going to HQMC as Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4.[59]

One of the last elements of the MAB to depart was a detachment of Communication Support Company, 7th Communication Battalion (CSC-7), which left two days after General Armstrong and his staff, thus affording 3d MAB the means to communicate until the very last moment. Major Robert T. Himmerich, commander of the company, later explained how his command was incrementally reduced so that General Armstrong could communicate until he boarded his airplane on 26 June:

> In reality the company did not stand down, but rather displaced from Vietnam to MCAS, Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. As operational missions, except for the Communication Center, were transferred to XXIV Corps signal units, personnel released became involved in preparing equipment for transportation in USS *St. Louis* (LKA 116) on 25 June. The AN/TNC-5 was the last major piece of equipment to be processed, and when it was taken off line, communication guard was shifted to the Air Force Communication Squadron at Da Nang Air Base. Message traffic was picked up and processed every two hours until Captain Fisheto (Comm Center Officer) filed the Brigade Headquarters and CSC-7 movement reports on 26 June. The final message pickup was made when the movement reports were filed and carried to General Armstrong's waiting aircraft. Because the Brigade was deactivated, CSC-7 brought the final MAF/MAB guidon out of Vietnam in 1971.[60]

*In addition to the Marines, 15,030 Army, 516 Navy, and 985 Air Force personnel left Vietnam in Keystone Oriole Alpha. MACV ComdHist 71, II, Anx F, pp. 9-10.

After the departure of the last elements of the 3d MAB, only 542 Marine officers and men remained in Vietnam. Most were members of Sub-Unit 1, 1st Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO); others comprised the Marine Advisory Unit (MAU), serving with the Vietnamese Marine Corps, and the U.S. Embassy security guard detachment at Saigon. A few served on the MACV staff.

Quang Nam after the Marines Left

As the 3d Marine Amphibious Brigade completed redeployment during May and June, the 196th Light Infantry Brigade began Operation Caroline Hill, the codename for its search and destroy activities in the mountains and lowlands west and south of Da Nang. The Army brigade, under Colonel William S. Hathaway, USA, who was replaced by Colonel Rutland B. Beard, Jr., USA on 6 June, had four infantry battalions and an attached armored cavalry squadron for maneuver elements. Two artillery battalions, the 3d of the 16th U.S. Artillery and the 3d of the 82d U.S. Artillery, provided fire support.* The 11th Combat Aviation Group, based at Marble Mountain, furnished helicopters.

The mission of the brigade in Quang Nam was to conduct "combat operations in assigned areas of operations within the Brigade Tactical Area of Interest to find, fix and destroy enemy forces, lines of communication and cache sites," to "deny the enemy use of the terrain for movement or the conduct of combat operations," to assist the Quang Nam Province pacification effort, and to provide "standoff security for designated pacified areas."[61] With the exception of one infantry company and one cavalry troop stationed at Da Nang as reaction forces, two infantry companies guarding Brigade Ridge, and another garrisoning Hill 65, the infantry battalions and armored cavalry squadron conducted continuous operations in the AOs in which they initially had deployed. The 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry and the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry patrolled west of Da Nang, with firebases on Hills 270 and 350. The 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry and the cavalry squadron swept the flat land around An Hoa, at times working westward into the Arizona Territory. The 2d Battalion, 21st Infantry searched the Que Sons south of Hill 510 and conducted sweeps in Antenna Valley.

The Army troops, like the Marines before them, had only brief firefights with small enemy detachments, and suffered most of their casualties from boobytraps. In the largest contact of the brigade's first two months in Quang Nam, on 27 May, Troop B of the cavalry squadron, on a combined sweep with the 3d Battalion, 51st ARVN Regiment, engaged about 50 VC. The Army cavalrymen and ARVN infantry killed 14 of the enemy and captured five, and five weapons. Between 29 April and 1 July, the 196th Brigade lost 15 dead and 125 wounded in Quang Nam, while killing 162 VC/NVA, taking 11 prisoners, and recovering 78 individual and three crew-served weapons.

The pattern of enemy operations continued unchanged in May and June. Guerrillas and local force units kept up a steady campaign of terrorism and small attacks by fire on South Vietnamese positions. The main forces continued the K-850 offensive. On 29-30 May, another wave of ground and rocket attacks signalled the start of the third and final phase of this campaign. This time, the largest assault came in central Dai Xuyen District, south of Da Nang, where over 80,000 South Vietnamese civilians, including high government officials, had gathered for a religious ceremony. In spite of security precautions by the 196th Brigade, the Korean Marines, and the 51st Regiment, three enemy battalions, including elements of the *38th Regiment* and *91st Sapper Battalion*, attacked the ceremony site on the 30th. The battle raged throughout the day and into the following night before the Communists fell back, leaving behind over 200 dead. The allies, who had lost five killed and 35 wounded, claimed a military victory, but 20 civilians had died in the fighting and homes in the area had suffered extensive damage.[62]

The *575th Rocket Artillery Battalion*, operating from its refuge on Charlie Ridge, continued to bombard Da Nang with its erratic, but occasionally deadly, missiles. At 0330 on 30 May, for example, the enemy fired 11 122mm rockets at Da Nang Airbase. The six rockets that fell on the airstrip caused no casualties or damage, but the other five landed in downtown Da Nang, where they killed 12 civilians,

*The 3d Battalion, 16th Artillery with headquarters in Da Nang and 155mm howitzer batteries on FSBs in the northeastern Que Sons and on Hill 65, provided direct support to the 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry and genetal support/reinforcing fires for both the 196th Brigade and the 198th Brigade in Quang Tin to the south. The 3d Battalion, 82d Artillery (105mm howitzer) was the direct support unit for the 196th Brigade, with batteries on former Marine FSBs in the Que Sons and in the hills west of Da Nang. This battalion had operational control of Battery D, 1st Battalion, 82d Artillery (8-inch and 175mm howitzers) on Hill 65 and of Battery C, 3d Battalion, 16th Artillery (155mm guns). 23d Inf Div ORLL, Period Ending 15Oct71, dtd 1Nov71, pp. 57-61.

wounded 11, and damaged six houses. Three more rocket attacks occurred during the first week of June, including the one on the 5th that narrowly missed Colonel Pommerenk's quarters at the airbase. This persistant harassing fire concerned Lieutenant General Lam, who ordered the Quang Nam Province Chief to increase night patrols in the Rocket Belt and conduct more combined antirocket search and destroy operations with allied forces.[63]

By mid-summer, both MACV and XXIV Corps were convinced that Quang Nam was becoming militarily less secure. Lieutenant General Sutherland, the XXIV Corps commander, observed in August:

> Quang Nam Province has a serious security problem. Present force levels in the province are inadequate to maintain the security level we had prior to U.S. Marine redeployments, since we have only the 196th Brigade and the 11th CAG replacing the 1st Marine Division and . . . [1st MAW]. Coordination between Vietnamese agencies has [also] been a problem in the province . . . .[64]

At about the same time, General Abrams reported to CinCPac that "a continuing pattern of regression" in security had become evident since November 1970 in Quang Nam, Quang Tin, and Quang Ngai in southern MR 1 and in Binh Dinh in northern MR 2. Abrams called these provinces, which comprised the enemy's *Military Region 5*, "one of the most troubled areas on the map of South Vietnam." The security rating of these provinces under the Hamlet Evaluation System all had fallen 10-15 percent since the previous November, and other indices of progress, such as the number of *Chieu Hois*, also had declined. The enemy appeared to have regained "significant . . . influence" over a substantial minority of the population of each province. In Quang Nam, the worst of the four, the Communists now controlled about 17 percent of the people. Abrams attributed this regression primarily to the reduction in U.S. forces in the area, especially the removal of the Marines from Quang Nam. He also cited poor coordination between the ARVN and local forces, a lack of mobile Regional Forces in many districts, and the devisive effects of the GVN elections as causes of the deterioration in security.

Abrams concluded:

> The overall impact of these combined factors has been a growing uncertainty and a lessening of self-confidence among local officials, local forces, and the general populace. The enemy in turn is taking advantage of this situation by directing the preponderance of his activities towards terrorism, to the general exclusion of large scale military actions. He has established psychological dominance over much of the populace and local friendly forces . . . .

On an optimistic note, Abrams ended his report by declaring, "This dominance is essentially a state of mind which can be changed."[65]

In spite of these pessimistic assessments, the situation in Quang Nam appeared to improve during the last half of 1971. After the end of the third phase of the K-850 Campaign, the *38th Regiment* and other enemy main force units withdrew from the lowlands into Base Area 112 and did not again emerge. Harassing attacks by guerrillas and local forces decreased in frequency and did less damage. Between January and June, according to a XXIV Corps analysis, the enemy made 424 attacks by fire and 97 ground attacks against secure areas and consolidation zones in Quang Nam. These attacks resulted in 294 South Vietnamese and allied dead and 1,021 wounded. Between July and December, the Communists made only 303 fire attacks and 25 ground assaults, killing 74 South Vietnamese and allied personnel and wounding 211. Rocket attacks on Da Nang stopped after the national elections in October, and by the end of the year the city had enjoyed three consecutive bombardment-free months. The cessation resulted partly from the 1st Task Force's Operation Da Nang 101, during which ARVN and RFs and PFs continually patrolled the Rocket Belt.[66]

Except for the decline in security noted by Sutherland and Abrams which was partially remedied by the end of the year, no major alteration occurred in the military situation in Quang Nam after the Marines' departure. The enemy made no significant noticeable gains, but neither did the allies. The ARVN and local forces seemed to be holding their own, which could be interpreted as a success for Vietnamization. The question remained whether the South Vietnamese forces were sufficient in number and quality to hold the province when the remaining allied units withdrew.

CHAPTER 14

Continuing Operational Problems, 1970-1971

Protecting the Da Nang Vital Area—Base Defense—Intelligence: Collection and Use—The Boobytrap War

Protecting the Da Nang Vital Area

Marines had first landed in Vietnam in 1965 to protect the Da Nang airfield. Defense of the airfield, and also of the city of Da Nang and the teeming military and civilian complex surrounding it, continued to be a III MAF responsibility during the last year and a half of combat. The Da Nang Vital Area (DVA), as it was called, in early 1970 encompassed about 45 square miles of territory, was bordered on the south by the Cau Do River and on the east by the South China Sea and extended westward to include the airbase. An estimated 600,000 Vietnamese civilians lived in the DVA, their villages and hamlets crowding close to 65 South Vietnamese and 45 United States military installations. These installations included ARVN I Corps Headquarters, the III MAF and later XXIV Corps Headquarters at Camp Horn, the 1st MAW and MAG-11 cantonments at Da Nang, and MAG-16's field at Marble Mountain, as well as a variety of combat support and service support commands.

Most of the civilians in the DVA lived in Da Nang, South Vietnam's second largest city. Called Tourane by the French, Da Nang had grown explosively as a result of the war, its population increasing from 110,000 in 1961 to 400,000 10 years later. Government and public services had not kept pace with growth. In 1969, the city had only six postmen and 380 telephones. It possessed neither a sewage system nor a newspaper. Only 10 percent of the population was served by the municipal electric system and seven percent by the water system. A U.S. Government report described Da Nang as "a miserable collection of unserviced huts, infused with temporary military infrastructure, surrounding a heavily overused and outdated city core."[1] The congested downtown area and the outlying hamlets were a refuge for U.S. and ARVN deserters and AWOLs, prostitutes, and drug peddlers. Viet Cong agents and terrorists mingled with the city's rootless, often unemployed lower class.

South Vietnamese political and military authority within the DVA was divided. The area around Marble Mountain Air Facility and a strip of land between the south end of the airfield and the Cau Do River were part of Hoa Vang District, with defense and civil government conducted by the district under the supervision of Quang Nam Province. The rest of the DVA, including the city and the airfield, constituted the municipality of Da Nang, controlled both militarily and politically by a mayor appointed from Saigon. The mayor was independent of and often hostile to the province chief. ARVN Colonel Nguyen Noc Khoi, Mayor of Da Nang during 1970, also acted as Commander, Da Nang Special Sector (DSS), and as Deputy for Garrison Affairs to the I Corps commander, Lieutenant General Lam. As Mayor, Khoi supervised the activities of the 1,376 national policemen and three companies of the National Police Field Force stationed in Da Nang. As Commander, Da Nang Special Sector, he controlled 3 Regional Force companies, 19 Popular Force platoons, and 16,000 armed PSDF members. As Deputy for Garrison Affairs, Khoi was responsible for maintaining order among all RVNAF military personnel in Da Nang City and directed the Vietnamese Armed Forces Police there.[2]

III MAF, in cooperation with Da Nang Special Sector and Hoa Vang District, coordinated the defense of the U.S. military installations in and around Da Nang and assisted in the general protection of the city. Under III MAF supervision, the 1st Military Police Battalion, which had arrived at Da Nang in 1966 to relieve Marine infantry guarding the vital airfield, performed the defense function. At the beginning of 1970, the battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Speros D. Thomaidis, was assigned the mission of planning and directing the integrated defense of the DVA. This was to be accomplished in cooperation with the Commander, Da Nang Special Sector, by coordinating the activities of tenant units to assign and secure sectors of responsibility, establish and maintain lines of communication, and constitute reserve contingency forces.

In essence, the battalion supervised the close-in defense activities of the commands within the DVA and ensured that these commands were ready to furnish company and platoon reaction forces, as required, for operations in the area. The MP battalion itself manned the fortifications surrounding Da Nang Airbase. It conducted antiinfiltration patrols and ambush-

bushes and maintained observation posts outside the boundaries of the various installations, and it assisted South Vietnamese security forces guarding strategic bridges.[3]

Also located in the DVA, the 3d Military Police Battalion, under Lieutenant Colonel Charles Fimian, assisted the 1st Battalion in security efforts. The 3d Battalion, in addition to furnishing war dogs for the 1st Marine Division, provided guards for the III MAF Correctional Facility, staffed the III MAF Criminal Investigation Department (CID), and contributed a 50-man MP contingent to the U.S. Armed Forces Police (AFP) in Da Nang. Marines from this AFP detachment protected the U.S. Consulate in Da Nang and helped guard the POW ward at the U.S. Army 95th Evacuation Hospital.*[4]

On 10 August, as the 3d MP Battalion prepared for redeployment in Keystone Robin Alpha, the 1st MP Battalion assumed control of the Marine war dog teams and also took over the 3d Battalion's security responsibilities in the DVA. The 1st Battalion, now under Lieutenant Colonel Newell T. Donahoo, who had relieved Lieutenant Colonel Thomaidis on 2 June, furnished guards for the former III MAF brig, which passed under Army control on 10 August. Company A of the 1st MP Battalion provided the AFP detachments, administered the dog force, and manned the III MAF CID. The 1st MP Battalion initially was scheduled for redeployment in late 1970, and by mid-August III MAF had completed plans to replace it with a provisional defense battalion consisting of one MP company and a rifle company from the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines. With the delay of Marine redeployments, III MAF scrapped this plan and retained the entire 1st MP Battalion, which in fact became one of the last Marine ground units to stand down.[5]

Throughout 1970 and early 1971, 1st MP Battalion Marines, who were not detailed to the Armed Forces Police or other special assignments, put in an average of 21 hours per week on day watch and 24 on night watch. They spent another eight hours on patrols and ambushes and manned portions of the Da Nang perimeter for another 48 hours. In July 1970, a typical month, the battalion carried out 280 fire team and 30 squad daytime patrols and 300 fire team and 133 squad night ambushes, made 31 river patrols, and manned 62 squad combat outposts. The battalion also conducted one multi-company operation. Of the total of 836 small-unit activities, the battalion conducted 627 with South Vietnamese forces. None of these operations produced significant enemy contact. The few actions that did occur were confined to brief exchanges of fire or an occasional grenade thrown at a passing Marine patrol.[6]

Each month elements of the battalion took part in sweeps and cordon and search operations in cooperation with Vietnamese Regional and Popular Forces, national police, and with reaction forces from other U.S. commands in the DVA. These operations rarely flushed out any NVA or VC, but they produced a steady haul of suspected VCI. RVNAF deserters and American military personnel who were off limits or absent without leave were also frequently taken into custody. During August, for example, companies of the 1st MP Battalion participated in 10 searches, apprehending 16 VCI, 35 ARVN deserters, 2 U.S. Army soldiers, a Marine, and a U.S. Navy sailor.

Working with troops and police from Da Nang Special Sector, the Marine MPs cracked down on the drug peddlers and prostitutes that infested the city. On 12, 13, and 14 October, elements of Company B joined Vietnamese authorities in a series of raids on hideouts in downtown Da Nang. The MPs and police seized caches of drugs, and arrested 21 Marines and five U.S. Army soldiers, all of whom were turned over to the Armed Forces Police and charged with being in unauthorized areas. They also apprehended 27 prostitutes and two VC suspects.

The enemy in the DVA consisted mostly of Viet Cong terrorists, sappers, and political agitators who usually operated in groups of three to five. By effective security measures, III MAF prevented sapper attacks on the airfields during 1970 and early 1971, but terrorism still took a steady toll of American and South Vietnamese lives and property. During July 1970, for example, three civilians were killed and 2 U.S. Marines, 11 ARVN soldiers, 6 national policemen, and 14 civilians were injured in 10 separate terrorist incidents. In October, Navy intelligence reported that enemy sappers were planning to attack the U.S. Consulate in

*Until 1 January 1970, the commander of the 3d MP Battalion had the additional duty of III MAF Provost Marshal. As such, he had operational control of the U.S. Armed Forces Police in Da Nang. On 1 January, a separate III MAF Provost Marshal was created on the MAF staff, again with operational control of the AFP. On 9 March 1970, as part of the III MAF/XXIV Corps exchange of roles, XXIV Corps took operational control of the AFP, to which the Marines continued to contribute a contingent of MPs. Later, on 15 June 1970, the 504th Military Police Battalion, U.S. Army, took operational control of the AFP under XXIV Corps. 3d MP Bn ComdC, Jan70, Mar70, Jun70.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A800401

Marine Cpl Gavin R. Lebus, left, holds the leash on his sentry dog "Max" taut while Sgt Ted J. Ryan, Jr., muzzles his dog "Caesar" before boarding a Marine CH-53 helicopter. The men and dogs are from the Sentry Dog Platoon, 3d Military Police Battalion.

Da Nang. The 1st MP Battalion temporarily doubled its guard force at the consulate, but no attack took place. Communist harassment of the DVA declined in the last months of 1970, partly as a result of severe floods, but gradually increased again in early 1971.

Viet Cong terrorism sometimes took unusual forms. During March 1971, for instance, the MP battalion received reports of "female VC operating in Da Nang in the role of prostitutes with the intention of spreading VD to American and Korean officials. These VC were also reported to have been carrying small weapons with the intention of assassinating clients." These ladies of the evening, if in fact they existed, claimed no known victims, but other young female Viet Cong were active in Da Nang. The MPs helped to break up a cell of 15- to 18-year-old VC girls who had been blowing up allied military vehicles with bombs made from soda cans filled with plastic explosive.[7]

Rockets attacks were the greatest Communist threat to the DVA, but their effect during 1970 and 1971 was more political and psychological than military. The III MAF Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Leo J. Dulacki, observed:

> They sure didn't inflict much damage on us . . . . I think they were pretty damn poor when you consider what they could have done. Imagine the number of ammunition dumps, the number of fuel depots and what-have-you we had scattered all over . . . . If you had given me a couple of Marine squads I could have raised holy hell . . . by just planting a rocket or a mortar in the right place at the right time . . . .[8]

Looking back at the effects of enemy rocket attacks, Dulacki conceded that while of neglible importance militarily in most instances, rocket attacks on Da Nang

served the enemy in other ways: "Unfortunately, these attacks did achieve one success—the stateside media blew such incidents completely out of proportion and drew erroneous conclusions as to their meaning and effect."[9]

The Marine MPs had to contend with internal South Vietnamese domestic terrorism, as well as the more familiar enemy violence. ARVN soldiers occasionally threw grenades at national policemen and Popular Forces fired small arms to break up fights between rival non-Communist political groups. During October, the battalion conducted a series of psychological operations in the supposedly pacified hamlets on the north and west borders of the Da Nang Airbase, "in an effort to gain popular support to stem the indiscriminate firing of small arms . . . directed towards the perimeter bunkers and aircraft." In spite of this effort, aircraft landing and taking off continued to be subjected to sporadic fire, some of which appeared to be from Popular Forces compounds.[10]

During the first months of 1971, as III MAF was replaced by 3d MAB, the 1st Military Police Battalion, now commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John Colia, who had replaced Lieutenant Colonel Donahoo the previous November, continued to protect the Da Nang Vital Area. On 7 May, with the cessation of all Marine combat, the battalion ended small-unit operations and turned defense of the airfield over to the 104th Regional Force Battalion and the 796th Regional Force Company. The MP battalion retained its AFP and brig duties throughout the rest of May, as well as the guard of the remaining 3d MAB cantonments. On 1 June, a detachment of Marines from the U.S. Embassy Security Guard in Saigon relieved the MPs protecting the Da Nang consulate, and five days later the battalion was released from all Armed Forces Police tasks. The battalion stood down on 7 June. By the 24th, all elements had departed for Camp Pendleton, where the battalion was deactivated. As the last Marines left, the commander of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade took over as defense coordinator for U.S. installations in the DVA.*[11]

Base Defense

Throughout Quang Nam, major Marine bases were potentially lucrative targets for ground patrols and attacks by fire. Sprawling complexes such as LZ Baldy, FSB Ross, Hill 55, and An Hoa Combat Base contained headquarters, supply dumps, artillery batteries, and communications and support units of many kinds. Some bases housed ARVN and U.S. Army as well as Marine commands. By 1970-1971, the Marines had perfected their system for defending these bases, primarily using manpower from tenant units, while tying down a minimum of infantry units to static defensive missions.

Typical of the Marine base defense system in its most highly developed form was the 5th Marines' plan for protecting An Hoa Combat Base.[12] Until American withdrawal from An Hoa in midsummer 1970, this complex contained the 5th Marines' regimental command post and the rear elements of the regiment's 2d and 3d Battalions. The roughly triangular-shaped installation, just across the Thu Bon River from the Arizona Territory and within easy reach of enemy infantry and rocket attacks, also contained Headquarters Battery, Battery E, and the Mortar Battery of the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines; Battery M, 4th Battalion, 11th Marines; the 3d 175mm Gun Battery; a platoon of the 1st 8-inch Howitzer Battery; a tank platoon; engineer and motor transport companies; and detachments from Force Logistic Command and MAG-16. The base included a small airfield, and two helicopter landing zones. A continuous belt of barbed wire surrounded An Hoa, backed by fortified two- or three-man fighting positions, and several firing positions for tanks; five watchtowers overlooked the surrounding terrain.

During spring and early summer 1970, the 5th Marines commander, Colonel Ralph F. Estey, as installation coordinator, was in charge of the defense of An Hoa. Estey exercised this authority through his executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel William R. Kephart, who performed the additional duty of base defense commander (BDC). The base was divided into six sectors, lettered A through F, each encompassing a section of the perimeter and the units within it. The 5th Marines designated a commander for each sector, normally the commander or executive officer of one of the tenant units,* who was responsible for manning and maintaining the perimeter defenses and watch-

*The commander of the 23d Infantry Division had the ultimate responsibility for DVA security, but he delegated the actual coordination of defense efforts to the 196th Brigade.

*In April 1970, the sector commanders were: Sector A—Executive Officer, 3/5 (Rear); Sector B—CO, Headquarters Company, 5th Marines; Sector C, Executive Officer, 2/11; Sector D—CO, Base Augmentation Company; Sector E—CO, 3d 175mm Gun Battery; Sector F—Executive Officer, 2/5 (Rear).

tower of his sector and for daily patrolling of the defensive wire. Each sector had its own combat operations center (COC), linked to its fighting positions by sound powered telephone and to the regimental COC by both telephone and radio. Sector commanders and duty officers met with the BDC each afternoon to receive the latest intelligence of enemy activities and coordinate night defensive operations.

To meet the threat of infantry and sapper assaults, the base maintained reaction forces. Each sector was required to have 10-20 Marines available for deployment to the 5th Marines COC or any prescribed assembly point. In addition, the Headquarters Commandant of the 5th Marines organized a provisional rifle company, which mustered daily at the regimental COC. This unit could be committed anywhere within the combat base. Finally, the 5th Marines rotated one rifle company in from the field to act as base defense augmentation company. Under operational control of the base defense commander, this company defended Sector D and furnished Marines for patrols and road sweeps outside the perimeter and for working parties within the base. During a major ground attack, any or all of these units could deploy to reinforce a section of the perimeter, contain a breakthrough, or counterattack.

To help repel assaults and to counter rocket and mortar bombardment, the 5th Marines had elaborate artillery fire plans. The regiment divided the entire area around An Hoa, including previously used or suspected enemy rocket and mortar positions, into targets identified by map grid locations and assigned each target to a specific battery, usually of the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines. A section of two 81mm mortars, controlled by the 5th Marines S-3, had the sole task of firing illumination missions as requested by the sectors. Each day, the 5th Marines tried to obtain advance political and military clearance for artillery fire on designated targets, especially the rocket and mortar positions. During enemy attacks by fire, Marines in the watchtowers would attempt to spot the enemy locations and phone them in to the 5th Marines COC over a special countermortar/rocket communications line. The regiment could then request fire missions on the precleared targets.

Colonel Estey could place An Hoa in any of four alert conditions. Condition I meant that the installation was under ground or fire attack; Condition II denoted "imminent" attack; Condition III indicated that an attack was expected within 12 hours; Condition IV, in effect most of the time, required only normal security precautions and implied no immediate threat of a major assault. The base was also subject to three readiness conditions. These ranged from Condition C, the usual daytime defense posture, in which each sector manned its watchtower and two or three perimeter fighting positions, through Condition B, in which reaction forces were to be available for muster within 15 minutes, to Condition A, under which all fighting positions were fully manned, command and control facilities activated, reaction forces assembled and standing by, and the base blacked out.

In October, after the 5th Marines shifted its base to LZ Baldy, it put a similat defense plan into effect. Again, the regimental executive officer acted as base defense commander, this time with four sector commands under him. Each sector maintained its own squad-size reaction force and furnished a platoon for a mobile base defense reaction company. The artillery defensive fire plan again featured preassigned and precleared targets covering the area around the base.[13]

Defense of the numerous allied headquarters and installations behind Division Ridge, immediately west of the Da Nang Vital Area, followed similar principles. In this roughly triangular eight-by-five-mile area, which stretched from the Cau Do River north almost to the Cu De River, were concentrated III MAF Headquarters at Camp Haskins, the 1st Marine Division CP, the Force Logistic Command Headquarters at Camp Books, the 1st and 11th Marines CPs, the III MAF Transit Facility, and the Freedom Hill Recreation Center. Two U.S. Navy construction battalions, Army MP and helicopter units, an Army replacement battalion and R and R Center, and ground elements of the Air Force 366th Tactical Fighter Wing also had cantonments behind Division Ridge. South Vietnamese commands there included the 1st Mobile Brigade Task Force Headquarters, the Hoa Cam RF/PF Training Center, and artillery and engineer units.*

*Reading roughly from north to south, the tenant units were: III MAF Headquarters (Camp Haskins); Force Logistic Command (Camp Books); NCBs 5 and 62 (USN); 58th Transportation Battalion (USA); 11th Marines; 1st Marines; 1st Motor Transport Battalion Headquarters, 1st Marine Division; 1st Medical Battalion; 11th Motor Transport Battalion; 1st Reconnaissance Battalion; 15th Light Engineer Company (ARVN); 8th Engineer Company (ARVN); 16th Bridge Company (ARVN); Freedom Hill Recreation Center (III MAF); 522d Replacement Battalion (USA); 478th Aviation Company (USA); III MAF Transit Facility; 1st Battalion, 5th Marines; 504th MP Battalion (USA); 366th Tactical Fighter Group (USAF); Ammunition Company, 1st FSR (ASP-1); MASS-3; 1st Mobile Brigade Task Force (ARVN); 44th Artillery (ARVN); Hoa Cam RF/PF Training Center.

After 10 August 1970, when III MAF discontinued the Northern and Southern Sector Defense Commands, this entire headquarters and support complex was included in the TAOR/TAOI of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines. This battalion, which was the division reserve, acted as defense coordinator for both American and South Vietnamese tenant units. By early 1971, the battalion had divided the area into three sectors, designated from north to south A, B, and C. The battalion commander was in charge of the defense of Sector C, which included the battalion headquarters cantonment on Hill 34. Under 1st Battalion supervision, the commander of the 1st Marine Division Headquarters Battalion coordinated the defense of Sector B. The 1st Battalion, 5th Marines directed the protection of the northernmost area, Sector A, through a small satellite COC established at Camp Books. Each tenant unit conducted its own perimeter defense and maintained internal security against sabotage and infiltration. The 1st Battalion, 5th Marines kept two rifle companies on Division Ridge. These two companies occupied observation posts, manned fortified positions, and patrolled areas outside the cantonment boundaries.[14]

Late in March 1971, when the 1st Battalion stood down for redeployment in Keystone Robin Charlie, the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines took over its TAOI and defense coordination mission. The 2d Battalion divided the area into two defense sectors, instead of three, but otherwise continued the security system established by its predecessor. On 7 May, as Marines ended ground operations, the 2d Battalion was relieved by elements of the 196th Brigade, which in turn assumed the coordination task.[15]

With the exception of a 6 January 1970 sapper attack on FSB Ross, the Communists did not seriously test the Marines' base defenses during 1970 and 1971. They confined their harassment of Marine bases to a steadily diminishing volume of rocket and mortar fire.[16] How much of the base defense success resulted from American preemptive operations and the formidable nature of the defenses, and how much from a deliberate Communist decision to go after the South Vietnamese instead, is impossible to determine with finality. Nevertheless, it appeared that III MAF had succeeded in protecting its rear in a war without fronts.

Intelligence: Collection and Use

Timely, accurate information about the enemy is a prerequisite for military success. The guerrilla chatac-

Marine gunners man their 106mm recoilless rifle from a defensive position in preparation to fire a mission after being told that 30 enemy infantrymen were stopped in the open. Col Clark V. Judge, Commanding Officer, 5th Marines, peers through binoculars.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373701

ter of much of the struggle in Vietnam made timely intelligence even more vital, and at the same time more difficult to collect and evaluate. Lieutenant General Leo J. Dulacki, who had been III MAF G-2 in late 1965, pointed out that in a conventional war, collecting information about the other side "is not . . . that difficult from the standpoint of the intelligence people. The enemy has tanks. It's easy to pick up tanks with reconnaissance aircraft and the like. The enemy has organized units. It's easy to pick up the location, movements and the like of organized units."[17] Dulacki observed in retrospect, however, that the Marines learned in Vietnam that the conventional intelligence indicators were seldom to be found. "The guerrilla not only did not possess conventional equipment, he didn't even wear a uniform and was hidden among the populace. An alien language and culture further exacerbated the problems." Intelligence was not accorded its rightful importance in the early period of III MAF involvement. In 1965 the III MAF intelligence section was a handful of officers and men who were according to Dulacki:

> . . . struggling to perform a Herculean task. The development and growth of the assets required to perform the crucial intelligence tasks was long and slow, too long and too slow, but it eventually materialized. It had to. And the intelligence personnel acquitted themselves with distinction.[18]

By early 1970, the Marines' intelligence effort had evolved into a many-faceted, highly sophisticated system that combined traditional methods with new technology. Brigadier General Simmons, the ADC of the 1st Marine Division, recalled that during his first Vietnam tour in 1965-1966, "we were half-blind and nearly deaf." When Simmons returned in mid-1970, "I was not prepared for the tremendous advances in Marine combat intelligence which I found . . . ."[19]

III MAF and its subordinate units obtained much information from established methods of air and ground reconnaissance. VMO-2's OV-10As served as the airborne eyes of the 1st Marine Division, flying hundreds of visual reconnaissance missions each month. The versatile OV-10A, which also could perform tactical air control and attack functions, proved, in General Simmons' words, to be a "superb platform" for aerial reconnaissance.*[20]

Until VMCJ-1 redeployed in July 1970, its RF-4Bs flew conventional and infrared photographic and ground radar survey missions for III MAF. Although hampered by frequent equipment breakdowns, the squadron, which had its own film processing facility, produced finished pictures within two hours of an emergency mission request. Frequently, response took longer, because III MAF, as a subordinate under the MACV system of single management of aviation, had to pass many of its photographic mission requests through the Seventh Air Force, rather than directly to the 1st MAW. After VMCJ-1 left Vietnam, III MAF depended on the U.S. Air Force for most of its aerial photography and on the XXIV Corps G-2 (Air) staff for film processing.*

Rapid, expert interpretation of aerial photographs was essential. Colonel Edward W. Dzialo, the III MAF G-2, a former photo interpreter, emphasized that "it isn't the picture that you want, but the information that's on the picture." Dzialo declared that the old adage, "One picture is worth 1,000 words, " had ceased to be valid. "In today's modern photography . . . a thousand words [from expert analysts] are better than the picture." Until late February 1970, III MAF had concentrated all photographic interpretation in the Photo Imagery Interpretation Center (PIIC) of its G-2 section, to which most of the 1st MAW's photo interpreters were attached. Between 17 and 23 February, as part of the general reduction of its authority, III MAF returned the interpretation mission and the photo interpreters to the 1st MAW PIIC, which performed this function until the wing redeployed.[21]

Ground patrolling and reconnaissance was another basic information source. The 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, reinforced until July 1970 by the 3d Force Reconnaissance Company and from August 1970 through early 1971 by a subunit of the 1st Force Reconnaissance Company, screened the western approaches to the populated area of Quang Nam. Reconnaissance patrols penetrated deep into mountain base areas to locate enemy troops and camps and direct air strikes and artillery against them.** Closer to the hamlets and villages, a myriad of infantry small-unit activities continually generated information which was passed to the regiments and the division.[22]

The Marines' artillery observation and target acquisition system also produced intelligence.*** Through-

*For details of the other functions of VMO-2, see Chapter 15.

*For further discussion of the electronic warfare role of this squadron and the single management system, see Chapter 15.

**For an extended discussion of reconnaissance operations, see Chapter 17.

***For additional detail on artillery targeting and operations, see Chapter 17.

out Quang Nam, numerous observation posts not only directed artillery fire but also permitted general surveillance of enemy movements. Many of these observation posts were equipped with the Integrated Observation Device (IOD). According to Colonel Dzailo, the IOD, designed to spot targets for artillery attack, "helps us . . . in intelligence because of the readout capability that we have from it. . . . We can always follow them [the enemy] to a certain extent, where they originated and where they're going. . . ."[23] In the same way, the 11th Marines' computerized Fire Support Information System (FSIS), a continuously maintained data file of enemy sightings and action taken against them, assisted intelligence analysis, as well as fire direction. According to Colonel Edward A. Timmes, 1st Marine Division Assistant G-2 during 1970:

> It [FSIS] provides, really, more than . . . the program intended . . . . It . . . gives a historical base to your intelligence shop . . . . It provides the best briefing to the unit going into that particular area, of everything that has ever been seen, ever been attacked, and such . . . . It allows you to provide an analysis in two ways. First, your own intelligence analysis of how well have you done in this particular area, as far as cleaning up the enemy . . . . It also allows the operations people to take a look at it . . . so you now have an operational trace that you can order . . . .[24]

Prisoners and captured enemy documents yielded much information. Major John S. Grinalds, the 1st Marines' S-2, considered these two sources, and intercepted enemy radio signals, "the three most valuable sources of information that we had in our TAOR . . . ." The most important document discovery of the last year of the war came in November 1970, during Operation Imperial Lake, when Marines found the complete files of the enemy's Quang Nam security section. Among other things, this huge mass of material contained the names, and in some cases photographs, of many key members of the Viet Cong infrastructure.[25]

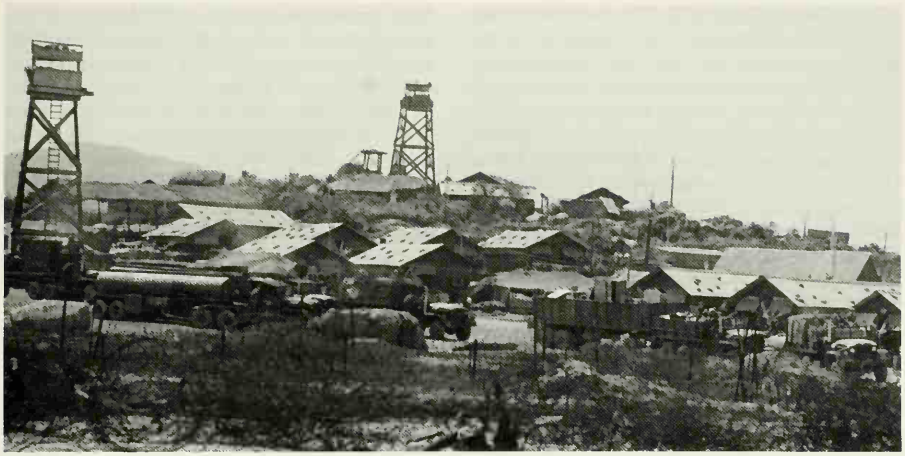
To extract information from POWs and documents, the 1st Marine Division relied heavily on the specially trained Marines of its interrogation-translation teams (ITTs), interpreter teams (ITs), and counterintelligence teams (CITs).* These teams worked under the division G-2 section. In mid-1970, the division had four ITTs under its control, three of them attached to the infantry regiments and the fourth located in the POW ward of the 95th Army Evacuation Hospital in Da Nang. These teams, as their name implied, interrogated NVA and VC prisoners and civilian detainees and reviewed captured documents. Of the two Interpreter Teams, one constituted the Division Interrogation Center and the other the Document Translation Center. In July 1970, a typical month, the Document Translation Center screened 58 batches of papers, totalling 1,117 items, and translated 58 of the documents. The team also translated four ARVN interrogation reports, 19 ARVN messages, and the monthly report of the Quang Nam Pacification and Development Committee. The three CITs, in addition to performing their usual security and counterespionage tasks, participated extensively in the effort to neutralize the Viet Cong infrastructure. Team members accompanied Marine units in the field, checking the identities of detained civilians against blacklists of known VC leaders. The teams also employed Vietnamese agents to ferret out information on VCI membership and activities and on the enemy military order of battle. Both ITTs and CITs questioned prisoners, but with different objectives. The interrogation teams engaged in lengthy questioning following a set procedure, while the counterintelligence teams tried to obtain information which could be used immediately in continuing operations.[26]

These Vietnamese language trained Marines were useful in intelligence gathering but their ability to extract data from POWs and informants was limited. The Vietnamese language is so complex and subtle that even the most fluent American had difficulty conducting a meaningful conversation, not to mention an effective interrogation. Major Grinalds, himself a graduate of military Vietnamese language schools, observed:

> I could ask: "Where's the head?"; "I'd like a cup of coffee"; "How are your children?" Things like that. But to actually get in and interrogate a . . . captured NVA or VC—unless he were really willing and trying to give me information—was a very difficult thing. The same thing is true of every other American interpreter or linguist that I saw . . . .[27]

The Marines employed many Vietnamese interpreters and agents, relying heavily on the Kit Carson Scouts with their proven loyalty and knowledge of the people and terrain. Some Marine units also worked extensively with the South Vietnamese Government's Armed Propaganda Teams (APTs). As the name implied, the primary mission of these teams was politi-

*In July 1970, the division's attached teams were the 3d, 9th, 13th, and 15th ITTs 1st and 7th ITs; and 1st, 3d, and 7th CITs. 1st MarDiv ComdC, July 70, pp. 12-16.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373967

A view of Fire Support Base Ross as the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines prepares to leave by truck for Hill 34 and turn over the firebase to the South Vietnamese. Note the sandbags on the roofs to protect from typhoons, the lookout towers, and the extensive barbed wire.

cal and psychological warfare, but through informal conversations with villagers, APT members collected information about local guerrillas and the VCI. In the 1st Marines TAOI, whenever Major Grinalds's S-2 section received reports of a terrorist incident or of an impending attack, they would arrange to put an APT into the affected area. "By the time they get through working the area over," Grinalds reported, "they've got a good idea of what's going on, who the VCI are . . . who's bad, who's good, what's going to happen, what units have been in the area . . . ."[28]

To enlist the help of Quang Nam's civilians in their intelligence effort, the Marines had developed the Voluntary Informant Program (VIP). Under this program, administered by the division G-2 staff, each subordinate command down to the battalion level was provided with its own fund which it could use to buy information. Individual commands were granted wide discretion in spending this money, including the power to negotiate the amount of any payment less than 5,000 piasters. Rules for administering the program included provisions for careful accounting of money expended and for protecting the anonymity of informants, including relocating them and their families when necessary. Marine units spent much of their VIP money rewarding Vietnamese who brought in grenades, dud rounds, and other potential boobytrap material which littered the countryside, but occasionally they purchased information about the enemy which was of varying reliability. During July 1970, for example, 1st Marine Division units spent a total of 278,890 piasters (about $1,000 U.S.)* in 359 separate payments for turn-in of ordnance and made six payments for information.[29]

Reports from part-time agents recruited by the Voluntary Informant Program and from regular informants enlisted by the CITs, while large in volume, required careful evaluation. Vietnamese agents frequently told Americans what they thought the Americans wanted to hear. As Lieutenant General Nickerson put it, "You can buy the intelligence you want to hear . . . . As long as they know you are buying rocket intelligence, that you are going to get plenty of." Nevertheless, informants were indispensable sources of intelligence, especially about local Viet Cong members and their activities.[30]

The North Vietnamese and Viet Cong, like the Americans, relied heavily on radio for command and control. If the Americans could read enemy messages or just determine the locations of their transmitters, the Communists would lose much of their advantage

*At this time, the official GVN exchange rate was 275 piasters to $1 U.S.

of concealment. During 1970-1971, the 1st Radio Battalion provided III MAF with this capability.[31] At the beginning of 1970, the battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Delos M. Hopkins, was headquartered at Camp Horn, with its Headquarters and Service Company nearby at Camp Hoa Long and an Operations Company at Dong Ha in northern I Corps. Of the battalion's six radio platoons, three operated monitoring sites in Quang Nam and three were deployed along the Demilitarized Zone. During February and March, the battalion withdrew its elements in northern I Corps and transferred the signal intelligence mission there to the U.S. Army 407th Radio Research Detachment.* From then until it redeployed in April 1971, the battalion was concentrated in Quang Nam, with the exception of a platoon temporarily stationed at Chu Lai. The number of active platoons in the battalion gradually declined as Marine units redeployed, from six at the beginning of 1970 to four, all in Quang Nam, at the end of the year. In October and November 1970, the battalion, now under Lieutenant Colonel Edward D. Resnik,** moved its headquarters from Camp Horn and Camp Hoa Long to Camp Books, close to III MAF Headquarters at Camp Haskins.

Under III MAF operational control, the radio battalion deployed its men and equipment to monitoring sites at observation posts and firebases throughout Quang Nam. During large operations, such as Pickens Forest, Catawba Falls, and Imperial Lake, direct support units from the battalion accompanied the command groups to furnish information for immediate, rapid exploitation. Recalling the important role of 1st Radio Battalion Marines during Imperial Lake, Colonel Robert H. Piehl, commander of the 7th Marines, said the regiment "found this information very useful in planning our day-to-day operations . . . and frequently took advantage of it without waiting for it to be processed into intelligence by the Division G-2."[32]

Using both ground installations and airborne equipment, the Marine radio technicians listened to enemy messages and tried to fix the location of transmitter sites. They made an average of 2,000 to 3,000 radio direction fixes each month, many of which were then either attacked by air or artillery or became the objectives of ground operations. During early 1970 the 1st Marines launched most of its successful heliborne Kingfisher patrols on the basis of radio battalion intelligence reports. On other occasions, the battalion gave Marine units advance warning of enemy attacks, permitting the Marines to conduct preemptive attacks. Earlier in the war, extreme security precautions had prevented rapid transmission of signal intelligence to field units; however, by 1970 the Marines had largely overcome this problem. As a result, according to Colonel John W. Haggerty III, the Deputy G-3 of III MAF, by late 1970 the 1st Radio Battalion was furnishing "probably the best intelligence that the Marine Corps has ever had . . . . We always knew what the enemy was going to do and could always prepare for it."[33]

Highly developed radio intelligence was an improvement over previous methods and techniques. Electronic sensors, which III MAF was using extensively by 1970, were devices never previously employed on the battlefield. As a means of gathering information about the enemy and locating potential artillery and air targets, sensors showed great promise, but they also had significant limitations.

The sensors in use in 1970 were the products of a development effort begun five years earlier in connection with Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara's abortive Demilitarized Zone barrier project.* The sensor barrier, codenamed Duel Blade, had not been completed, but during 1968, MACV introduced a new program, Duffel Bag, to employ the sensors intended for the barrier in tactical operations elsewhere in South Vietnam. Marines had been involved in the early development of sensors and had used the devices extensively and effectively at Khe Sanh in early 1968.** By 1970, the 1st Marine Division had integrated sensors into its intelligence and artillery-targeting system.[34]

Most of the sensors employed by Marines were of the radio-frequency (RF) type, the designation refer-

*In anticipation of withdrawal from northern ICTZ, the 1st Radio Battalion, in cooperation with Army signal intelligence agencies, established a Joint Tactical Processing Center at Dong Ha in October 1969, and the Army personnel were gradually prepared to take over the radio monitoring mission along the DMZ. 1st Radio Bn ComdC, Oct 69, pts. II and III.

**Lieutenant Colonel Hopkins was relieved on 30 June 1970 by Major Donald J. Hatch, who in turn was relieved by Lieutenant Colonel Resnik on 31 July 1970.

*For detailed discussion of McNamara's DMZ barrier plan, see Jack Shulimson, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam 1966, An Expanding War*, (Washington: History and Museums Division, HQMC, 1982), pp. 314-319.

**Marines had used seismic intrusion devices at Da Nang as early as 1965.

ring to the method by which they transmitted information to monitoring stations. Small, battery powered, and usually camouflaged, sensors of this type were easy to conceal and could be dropped from aircraft or implanted by hand. Most were designed to self-destruct when tampered with or when their batteries were exhausted. Once in position, RF sensors reacted to minute physical activity in their immediate surroundings at ranges from five to 200 yards, depending on the device. Seismic sensors, known as Seismic Intrusion Devices (SIDs), the most common, responded to small ground vibrations, such as human footsteps. Magnetic sensors, or Magnetic Intrusion Devices (MAGIDs), detected moving metallic objects. Infrared sensors (PIRIDs) picked up heat radiations from bodies, vehicle engines, or campfires. Accoustic sensors detected audible noises. Seismic, magnetic, and infrared sensors, when activated, sent a signal to a receiver, known as a Portatale, from which the operators could determine the location and probable nature of whatever activated the sensor. Acoustic sensors transmitted the sounds they picked up. For the Da Nang Anti-Infiltration System (DAIS), the 1st Marine Division employed seismic and infrared line sensors, which were connected by wire to a readout device. After dismantling the DAIS in mid-1970, the division relied almost exclusively on RF sensors.[35]

During March 1970, the 1st Marine Division centralized the planting, maintenance, and monitoring of its sensors, tasks previously divided among the division and its regiments, in a Sensor Control and Management Platoon (SCAMP), part of the G-2 staff section.* When formed, the SCAMP had a strength of three officers and 82 enlisted Marines. It included a headquarters section, an operations section responsible for communications with tactical units, an installation section which planted and maintained sensors, a surveillance section which manned monitoring stations, and an instruction section to train other Marines in the use of sensors.[36]

The 1st Marine Division* requested sensor equipment and radio frequency assignments through XXIV Corps from the J-3 section of MACV, which controlled Project Duffel Bag. The Marines had no difficulty obtaining sensors, but often could not secure enough frequencies. Colonel James R. Weaver, the 1st MAW G-2, explained: "These are all line-of-sight transmissions . . . so your frequency control is pretty critical. You can't just set these things around everywhere because you wipe out somebody else's."[37]

By mid-1970, the 1st Marine Division had over 250 radio frequency sensors in operation in Quang Nam, which it used to target artillery and monitor enemy movement. Most of the sensors were clustered along the main infiltration routes from the mountains into the lowlands. They were monitored by SCAMP Marines at 12 readout stations positioned from Dong Den Mountain in the north to FSB Ryder in the southwest.

The division's sensors were usually planted in groups called "strings." In August 1970, the division had 80 active strings. A typical string, designed to detect movement along a trail, consisted of one magnetic and three seismic sensors. As the suspected enemy walked along the trail, the SIDs picked up the sound of their footsteps in succession and signalled a readout station. Simultaneous activation of the SIDs indicated vibrations from artillery fire, low-flying aircraft, or some other nonhuman source. If the suspected enemy carried weapons or ordnance, they would activate the MAGID. When a sensor string showed probable enemy presence, its monitoring station operator, usually located at an artillery observation post, could request a fire mission, alert nearby allied ground units, or simply record the time, direction of movement, and other details for intelligence analysis.

During August, Marines of the division SCAMP tried submerging modified MAGIDs in the rivers near Da Nang to detect rockets hidden under water, without significant results. SCAMP Marines, employing 1st MAW aircraft, also experimented with air-dropped acoustic sensors in remote enemy base camps. Other acoustic sensors, placed in known Communist

*Early in 1968, the Marine Corps Development and Education Center at Quantico established a tentative doctrine for Marine Corps use of sensors, which included a requirement for a specialized organization to manage them. The Marine Corps tested the SCAMP concept in Exercise Exotic Dancer II at Vieques in spring 1968. In May 1968, the 3d Marine Division established a Ground Surveillance Section (GSS), similar in functions to the SCAMP. The 1st Marine Division late the same year created a much smaller GSS, which merely advised the infantry regiments on location of sensors and readout sites and trained Marines in sensor operations. In October 1969, when the 3d Marine Division redeployed, its GSS, now renamed SCAMP, remained with III MAF to help U.S. Army and ARVN units take over the Marines' sensor system along the DMZ. This unit was deactivated on 31 December 1969. In March 1970, the 1st Marine Division formed its own full-fledged SCAMP with men drawn from other units of the division. Darron Intvw, pp. 92-93, 98-99; FMFPac, *MarOps*, Aug70, p. 15.

*III MAF allowed the division to communicate directly with the Army on sensor equipment matters. The MAF received information copies of all messages. Mosher Debrief.

hideouts in the populated areas, at times picked up the voices of suspected enemy, although they more often transmitted the chattering of monkeys or the squeak of tree branches rubbing together.[38]

The division used both troops and aircraft to emplace sensors. For example, infantry units conducted periodic operations in Antenna Valley, west of FSB Ryder, to cover the replacement or addition of sensor strings. As redeployments reduced Marine ground strength, the division, in cooperation with the wing, tried to develop methods for inserting and monitoring sensors from aircraft. CH-46s, OV-10As, and UH-1Es made sensor drops, while Douglas C-117Ds and Grumman US-2Bs of H&MS-17 attempted airborne monitoring. Aircraft shortages and inability to obtain required radio frequencies prevented continuous and effective aircraft monitoring, but the OV-10A proved well-adapted for sensor dropping and, carrying a Portatale, could accomplish limited readouts.*[39]

The number of sensors in use by the 1st Marine Division declined during 1970. The decline resulted, in part, from troop redeployments, which included the reduction of the SCAMP from 85 Marines to 28, and from a MACV decision to reduce the Marines' allotted radio frequencies from 10 to four. In anticipation of autumn redeployment of the 5th Marines, SCAMP Marines removed or deactivated most of its sensor strings in southern and western Quang Nam during the summer and closed all of its readout stations, except those on Hill 190, OP Reno, and Hill 65. When redeployment of the 5th Marines was postponed, in late August the SCAMP set up additional monitoring stations in the Que Son Mountains and Valley, manned by troops of the 5th Marines specially trained by the SCAMP, and also began implanting new sensor strings in southern Quang Nam. Nevertheless, by November, the number of operating sensors in the division TAOR had fallen to 76.

Sensor usage increased again during early 1971. As additional redeployments further thinned the ranks of Marine ground units, the division and then the 3d MAB installed more sensors, many of them air-dropped, to cover areas Marines no longer could patrol on foot. During March the Marines activated 22 new sensor strings, nine of them on the approaches to the Rocket Belt. By 30 April, 120 active sensors in 29 strings were deployed in Quang Nam.[40]

While most Marine commands found sensors useful, the new devices were not a substitute for other methods of gathering information. Sensor effectiveness was reduced by the shortage of trained Marine operators and by an absence of well thought-out tactical plans for exploiting sensor activations. Even with sound plans, however, it was questionable that, as redeployment continued, either the 1st Marine Division or 3d MAB had the men and means to execute them. The ability to respond quickly to sensor activations was also hindered because sensor readout and reporting functions concentrated in the division-controlled SCAMP. Infantry units often were unaware of activations within their TAORs until it was too late to respond. Major Grinalds complained: "The battalion commander would often find out . . . that he had movement in his TAOR from the division FSCC calling down for a clearance for an artillery mission . . . ." Except in remote, unpopulated areas, sensors inevitably picked up civilian movement and friendly troop activity, and as a result, according to General Simmons, "any sensing had to be regarded as highly tentative, subject to confirmation as to identity, friend or foe." Nevertheless, in spite of their deficiencies, sensors clearly represented a major addition to intelligence gathering technology, and one likely to be of increasing importance in the future.[41]

By whatever means it was collected, information had to be quickly correlated and transmitted as intelligence to staffs and units in the field. To speed up and improve this process, III MAF established a Surveillance and Reconnaissance Center (SRC) at Da Nang in November 1969, under the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Colonel John S. Canton. The center received a continuous flow of information from signal intelligence sources, sensor readouts, aerial reconnaissance and photography, POW interrogations, and captured documents and plotted it on a single map. On the basis of this data, the SRC planned the activities of the attached 1st and 3d Force Reconnaissance Com-

*The Surveillance and Reconnaissance Center in the wing G-2 supervised airborne planting and monitoring of sensors for the 1st Marine Division. The wing also flew sensor missions for U.S. Army units and dropped sensors of its own on enemy truck routes near the Laotian border. See for example 1st MAW G-2 ComdC, Mar 70, pp. 2-3. To compliment 1st Marine Division efforts in the fall of 1969, General Thrash directed his wing G-2 to "develop and implement an internal wing capability for reconnaissance and targeting" in western Quang Nam. Col James R. Weaver, Comments on draft ms, 18Apr83 (Vietnam Comment Files).

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373802

BGen Edwin H. Simmons, Assistant Division Commander of the 1st Marine Division, talks to Marines on the defensive position south of Da Nang. The Marines have cut down the trees to clear fields of fire. Note the commanding view of the river valley below.

panies; provided III MAF operations planners with comprehensive current intelligence; and furnished target information to the 1st MAW.

The Surveillance and Reconnaissance Center never had time to demonstrate its full potential. In March 1970, when III MAF relinquished control in I Corps to XXIV Corps the SRC staff was deactivated. III MAF, with its much reduced headquarters complement and TAOR, could no longer maintain the SRC, nor was there a need for it. XXIV Corps decided not to reconstitute the SRC. From the deactivation of the SRC until redeployment, the division and wing G-2 staffs coordinated the collection of intelligence. The remaining reconnaissance units, for example, came under operational control of the division.[42]

Establishing a timely exchange of information with both the South Vietnamese and Korean Marine forces in Quang Nam was a continuing and frustrating problem, especially for the 1st Marine Division. The Vietnamese, who often refused to pass information between their own commands, were slow in transmitting potentially valuable data to the Marines. The communication that did exist was usually based on acquaintances and friendships between CIT and ITT Marines and their Vietnamese and Korean counterparts, rather than on formal arrangements. In December 1970, to improve intelligence coordination, the 1st Marine Division, Quang Da Special Zone, Quang Nam Province, and the 2d ROKMC Brigade established a Combined Intelligence Conference, but to the end of the Marines' stay in Quang Nam, the inter-allied information exchange was, at best, sporadic.[43]

The January-June 1971 redeployments dissolved the Marines intelligence system. When the 3d MAB was activated, its G-2 section assumed control of the SCAMP, the ITs, ITTs, and CITs, and the wing's aerial reconnaissance and photography activities, while the remaining company of the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion was attached to the 1st Marines. The 1st Radio Battalion began deactivation and redeployment early in March, and the battalion's command group and colors left Vietnam on 15 April. A radio detachment of six Marine officers and 79 enlisted Marines was attached to 3d MAB's H&S Company. On 1 May, the SCAMP turned all of its remaining sensor strings and readout sites over to the 196th Brigade. Six days later, all Marine intelligence collection activities came to an end.[44]

The Boobytrap War

As the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong increasingly avoided combat during 1970-1971, they relied on boobytraps, officially grouped under the comprehensive title Surprise Firing Devices (SFDs), to inflict American casualties. Boobytraps, especially in the heavily populated, strongly pro-Communist countryside south of Da Nang, had been killing and maiming Marines with grim regularity since 1965. During the Marines' last year and a half of ground warfare, SFDs inflicted about half of the 1st Marine Division's casualties. The Marines had developed well thought-out countermeasures against these devices. Nevertheless, as they left Vietnam, they had to acknowledge that their efforts had reduced rather than solved the boobytrap problem.

For the most part, the hamlet guerrillas who planted boobytraps turned the Marines' own ordnance against them. Foraging parties of guerrillas and villagers diligently retrieved the dud bombs and rounds left by lavish allied use of their supporting arms. They also picked up grenades which had fallen off allied soldiers' web belts in the thick brush or which had been carelessly left behind at previously occupied positions, and they retrieved mortar rounds and other ordnance which had been dropped from broken helicopter slings. The VC used their gleanings to manufacture boobytraps in small, well-hidden, easily-moved hamlet workshops. While capable of improvising SFDs from almost any piece of allied ordnance, they especially favored the American M26 fragmentation grenade. Over 75 percent of the boobytraps encountered in the 1st Marine Division TAOR/TAOI were made from grenades, most of them M26s. The enemy also employed homemade devices, such as tin cans packed with plastic explosive and with pieces of wire, gravel, glass, or other sharp objects to serve as shrapnel. These, according to an officer in the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, "are probably as dangerous, if not more dangerous, than the ordnance that we have . . . and they will cause extensive [injury]."[45]

The Viet Cong commonly buried their explosive devices or attached them to tree trunks or low-hanging branches anywhere patrolling Marines were likely to go. The VC especially favored trails, dikes between flooded paddies, and other places where terrain channelled movement, or sites suitable for defensive positions, landing zones, and observation posts. Frequently, the enemy boobytrapped objects Marines would be apt to pick up as intelligence finds or souvenirs. On one occasion, the VC mined an infant's

corpse. The Viet Cong most often relied on trip wires hidden in grass and brush to cause the detonation, and they also used pressure-release devices, activated by a Marine stepping onto and then off of a buried trigger. To emplace their boobytraps, the Viet Cong routinely conscripted local civilians, including young children, who could move about freely and watch American operations near their hamlets. Many of these civilian boobytrappers, according to Major Dale D. Dorman, S-3 of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, which had perhaps the most heavily mined AO in Quang Nam, were "in effect between a dog and a fire plug . . . . It's a case of, either they do this or they are . . . killed or mutilated by the VC."[46]

The Viet Cong set boobytraps in large numbers with a systematic tactical purpose. For the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, it was "not uncommon for one of our patrols to go out [and] in the space of four hours find as many as five or six boobytraps . . . . We have found as many as 15 boobytraps in . . . 45 minutes." The enemy moved their boobytraps in response to the movement of Marine sweeps and patrols. According to Colonel Floyd H. Waldrop, the 1st Marine Division G-3, "the enemy has a habit of planting boobytraps, using them tactically, putting them out in just a matter of minutes." When a Marine patrol left its base, VC or peasants would hurry ahead of it and set traps in its path, or move in behind the Marines and mine their return route. Occasionally, VC being chased by Marines stopped long enough to emplace boobytraps for their pursuers, or deliberately lead Marines into previously boobytrapped areas. Often, the enemy used boobytraps to hamper Marine activities, then picked them up to facilitate their own movement or permit peasants to reach their fields. A 2d Battalion, 1st Marines squad leader recalled that the Viet Cong were:

> . . . never predictable. They usually have an area boobytrapped for a while, and then just leave the area alone, if all the boobytraps are found. And they won't touch this area again, possibly for about a month or two months, until everyone gets lax . . . and then all of a sudden they'll put 'em back out to catch people off guard . . . .[47]

The enemy also used concentrations of SFDs "in a pattern . . . suspiciously like a defensive mine field," to protect major caches, headquarters, and hideouts. Marines could penetrate these mined areas at will, but they had to move slowly and carefully, which allowed the enemy to escape with key items of equipment. Marines, preoccupied with the search for boobytraps, often overlooked cleverly concealed caches. Nevertheless, according to Major Dorman, "In going in there and in cleaning these [mined areas] out, we have found some . . . quite important finds in the way of radio gear, documents, officers, and such . . . ."[48]

To protect their own troops and civilians, the Viet Cong frequently posted boobytrap warnings. They occasionally used small paper signs written in French or Vietnamese or merely a crude drawing depicting an explosion. More frequently, they arranged combinations of sticks, stones, or other common objects to mark the location or direction of boobytraps. When Viet Cong main force or North Vietnamese units, unfamiliar with a locality, moved in to conduct an attack, the local guerrillas removed most of their SFDs to give the unit safe passage. Knowledgeable Marines used this habit as a clue to detect enemy movements and intentions. According to Major Grinalds, the 1st Marines S-2, "You can always tell when a main force unit has moved into some place like the Arizona or Dodge City, which is notoriously bad for boobytraps, because all the boobytraps disappear for about three days."[49]

For the enemy, boobytraps were a cheap and profitable method for maintaining pressure on the Americans. The experience of the 1st Platoon, Company H, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines on a particularly bad day in the Arizona Territory graphically demonstrated what a few Viet Cong with explosives could accomplish.[50] Early in the morning of 22 April 1970, the platoon began a patrol of the hamlets and rice paddies several miles northwest of An Hoa. At 0845, as the Marines were resting on dry ground after wading through waist-deep, flooded paddies, a machine gunner sat down on a large pressure-detonated boobytrap, later determined to have been a 105mm shell or a box mine. Staff Sergeant Thomas G. Ringer, the platoon sergeant reported, "all portions of [the machine gunner's] body from the middle of his stomach on down, were completely blown off and he was killed instantly." Three other Marines suffered multiple fragmentation wounds and concussions.

After a Marine helicopter evacuated the dead and wounded, the platoon continued its patrol. At 0950, a Marine hit a trip wire, setting off two boobytraps together; one was a 60mm mortar shell, the other a

M26 grenade.* These blasts wounded three more Marines; one lost a leg. The platoon called for another medical evacuation helicopter. After it took off with the wounded, the patrol moved out again. It had gone barely 15 meters when a Marine, who made the mistake of not following in the footsteps of the men ahead of him, set off another pressure-detonated land mine. This SFD wounded only the Marine who tripped it, blowing off part of his leg, and once again the platoon went through the routine of evacuating wounded, and then marched on. It finished the patrol without further incident, but without seeing or engaging the enemy.

Suffering heavy, often gruesome casualties from boobytraps as the Company H patrol did, necessitating the suspension of operations to evacate the dead and wounded, was frequent experience for units operating in the Da Nang TAOR's lowlands. In the latter stages of 1970 as redeployment proceeded and face-to-face contacts with the enemy lessened, these casualties became even more demoralizing. The casualties involved, Major General Widdecke pointed out, "are particularly profitless in that, unlike a firefight, no cost or penalty is inflicted on the enemy."[51]

Cumulatively, the enemy's boobytrap war caused significant operational limitations. The danger of hitting SFDs slowed infantry maneuver and often effectively restricted Marine patrolling. Constant danger undermined morale and further reduced combat effectiveness. A sergeant in the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines found that many of his men had a "psychological block" about boobytraps. "Whenever they took a step outside of their perimeter," he reported, "the only thing they could think of was boobytraps . . . . And it really puts them in a bind as far as getting the job done."[52]

By early 1970, the 1st Marine Division, after almost five years of bitter experience, had developed counter-boobytrap tactics. The Marine effort began with measures to hinder Viet Cong manufacture and emplacement of SFDs. In frequent hamlet cordon and search operations, infantry units concentrated on finding and destroying enemy boobytrap workshops. To deprive the workshops of raw material, the Marines expended most of their VIP funds by paying civilians to bring in dud or discarded ordnance. Vietnamese children, especially, responded to these appeals, hauling in everything from rifle cartridges and grenades to mortar shells. During June 1970 the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines paid out 105,500 piasters ($380 U.S.) for an assortment of explosives, including 44 M26 grenades, 69 Chinese Communist grenades, 11 containers of C-4, 44 105mm shells, and 13 81mm and 19 60mm mortar rounds. Marines suspected that they might be buying back their own stolen ammunition, but wherever the material came from, "by paying the children, we prevent this ordnance from becoming a boobytrap."[53]

Constant small-unit patrolling, although increasing Marine exposure to boobytraps, made it more difficult for the enemy to emplace them. Preparatory air strikes and artillery bombardment could detonate some boobytraps in dangerous areas before infantry moved in, although the shelling and bombing also involved the risk of adding to the number of battlefield duds available to the enemy.

Small Marine units maneuvering in the countryside took elaborate precautions. Patrols avoided using the same paths and halting places. Whenever possible, they stayed away from trails, paddy dikes, and easy routes through rough terrain. As one officer put it, "It may be a little hard on the individual Marine, but he will find it a lot safer to walk in rice paddies where the water may be up to his hips or even . . . his chest, rather than walking on a dike or on a trail."[54] Marines patrolled with Kit Carson Scouts whenever they could, or conducted combined operations with the Regional and Popular Forces, taking advantage of their allies' superior knowledge of the people and the ground. Small-unit leaders learned to "watch Charlie," following trails and paths which they saw the local villagers using, on the assumption that the inhabitants usually knew where the boobytraps were and avoided them.

Marines patrolling areas suspected or known to be boobytrapped moved slowly and cautiously. Wearing helmets and flak jackets, the Marines kept 15 to 20 meters apart to minimize casualties in the event of a detonation. The point man, and often other Marines, normally carried a probe stick, a long, thin pole of bamboo or similar light material, with which he carefully prodded the ground ahead of him. With his stick, an experienced, alert Marine could feel a trip wire in grass or underbrush before hitting it, or lo-

*Multiple groupings of SFDs, known as "Daisy Chains," were a favorite VC boobytrapping strategem.

cate a buried pressure-release trigger in soft dirt or sand. A few fortunate units acquired electric ordnance detectors and used them for the same purpose as the probe stick. Small-unit leaders carefully selected and trained their point men. Many tried to relieve the point man every 15 to 30 minutes in the field, before weariness dulled the keen edge produced by mental fatigue and anxiety.

During 1970, specially trained mine and boobytrap detecting dogs began accompanying Marine units on operations. These animals had been taught to find hidden SFDs by the odor of the explosives in them or by the scent of the VC who had planted them. Their keen hearing often could pick up the vibrations of a trip wire in the wind; and they could feel a wire touching the fur on their chests before running into it. Fourteen dogs and 18 Marine handlers arrived at Da Nang on 7 March and were attached to the 3d MP Battalion, which then controlled all III MAF war dogs. The first dogs went into the field on 18 March. By late August the number of mine and boobytrap dogs had grown to 23. When the 3d MP Battalion redeployed, these animals, with the scout and sentry dogs, were assigned to the 1st MP Battalion.[55]

Marines in the field found the dogs useful but not infallible. The intense heat of Vietnam often caused the dogs to become fatigued and less alert. Occasionally, the dogs tripped boobytraps, and their handlers sometimes misunderstood or ignored the animals' signals. Also, as a platoon commander in the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines observed; "After several days of following a dog, you become overconfident in the dog and you stay less alert."[56] In spite of their limitations, the dogs did provide another set of senses, in some respects sharper than those of men, for patrols working their way through dangerous terrain.

When a patrolling unit found or detonated a boobytrap, an established emergency procedure was put into effect. Every Marine froze in position. If the boobytrap had not gone off, a designated Marine, following a search for other nearby SFDs, carefully probed his way to the detected device, attached plastic explosive to it, and "blew it in place." The division repeatedly enjoined Marines not to tamper with or try to disarm boobytraps, a task reserved for trained engineers and ordnance disposal teams, but periodically Marines disregarded these injunctions and paid with life or limb.[57]

If a boobytrap was triggered, especially the grenade type, Marines were taught to use the four second delay unless the fuse had been shortened by the VC, between the tug of the trip wire and the explosion to drop to the ground, giving themselves a chance to escape some of the blast and shrapnel. In Company G, 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, which often ran into boobytrapped M26s in tall grass, Sergeant Thomas F. Massey told his Marines:

> . . . when they think they've tripped a boobytrap in tall grass to turn around and jump, back in the direction they came from. This has been very effective in quite a few cases, where guys knew they'd tripped the boobytrap, turned and jumped, and they just caught two or three pieces of shrapnel in their lower legs, where it could have been emergency medevacs or even worse.[58]

After a boobytrap detonation, the surviving Marines remained in position. An officer explained, "We found initially that when boobytraps were detonated, his buddies wanted to go and assist [the casualty] and by doing so they would detonate [another] boobytrap, causing three or four [more] casualties."[59] The senior Marine, with the unit corpsman following in his footsteps, probed his way to the injured man or men and administered first aid. Other members of the unit, continually probing for more boobytraps, secured a landing zone for the medical evacuation helicopter. Within 48 hours of hitting a boobytrap, the parent unit commander was required to send a report to the division, which included a brief narrative of the incident, a description of the preventive tactics used by the patrol, planned countermeasures to prevent further incidents, and recommendations and lessons learned.

Marine units in heavily boobytrapped TAORs/TAOIs tried to vary their methods of operation to reduce exposure to SFDs while still accomplishing their missions. For some units, limitation of daytime movement and patrolling proved effective for this purpose. In June 1970 the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, at the instruction of its new commander, Lieutenant Col William G. Leftwich, did most of its patrolling and ambushing at night, watching its AO

by day from static observation posts. Major Grinalds, then the battalion S-3, explained:

> The VCI would put out boobytraps in the day, ahead of us, and we hit them, and they'd bring them in at night so that their people could get out and roam at large. So we took advantage of their concept by moving at night with them and avoiding the boobytraps. Then we'd stop during the day and stay out. The kids and the VCI would watch us, and we just wouldn't move into a position where they could lay some boobytraps either in front of us or behind us . . . .[60]

During May, Marines of the 2d Battalion found 22 boobytraps and unintentionally set off 30. In July, with the new concept of operations fully implemented, they found 20 and detonated 9; and in August they discovered 18 and detonated 14. At the same time, according to Grinalds, "we also maintained the same level of contact . . . and . . . kept the rockets from being fired."[61]

Reducing the patrolling during the daytime led to fewer boobytrap casualties in many units, but there were tradeoffs accepted. In the heavily populated lowlands surrounding Da Nang, where VC/NVA agents continually operated, other commanders argued that failing to patrol during daylight afforded the enemy greater opportunity to conduct his business and maintain influence over the Vietnamese populace. Lieutenant Colonel William V. H. White, who commanded the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines through the spring of 1970, was convinced that "the size and nature of the terrain" in the 1st Marines AO necessitated extensive daytime patrolling, even if done with great caution because of the boobytrap threat: ". . . there were thousands of persons in the area, civilians, VC, RFs, PFs, ARVN, and others wandering around by day," he recalled, "it was necessary to get out among them to know what was going on." White also said that his experience with VC boobytrapping practices suggested that "only those types of boobytraps which interfered with normal daytime commerce were usually removed once placed." Most important, he contended, like many commanders, that units could not afford to "stay with one pattern too long" whether or not that included daytime patrolling. In short individual commanders were required to devise tactics which balanced the threat of boobytrap casualties with their ability to accomplish their mission of eliminating the enemy in assigned areas of operation.[62]

Other units devised their own expedients to control their AOs while minimizing boobytrap casualties. The 5th Marines simply stopped ordinary small-unit patrolling in known, thickly-mined areas, entering them only during large-scale, carefully prepared operations. In the Que Son Valley, in mid-1970, the 7th Marines began cordoning off VC-dominated hamlets during the day and then patrolling actively at night. According to Colonel Derning, the regimental commander, this procedure more effectively restrained enemy activity while at the same time reducing physical exhaustion and boobytrap casualties among the Marines.[63]

The 1st Marine Division made extensive efforts to pass on its hard-won antiboobytrap experience to newly assigned Marines. During late 1969, Major Wallace M. Greene III, of the G-3 staff drew up a comprehensive division standing operating procedure (SOP) for countermine warfare. Greene based his SOP on "correlation of various references; seminars with regimental and battalion commanders and their S-3s; conversations with platoon commanders, platoon sergeants, and pointmen; and attendance at the . . . Mine Warfare and Boobytrap School conducted by the 1st Engineer Battalion."[64] The SOP covered every aspect of the problem, from enemy methods and doctrine to post-detonation procedures. In addition to promulgating this basic guide, the division issued periodic bulletins to its subordinate units, informing them often of new VC techniques and devices and ways of countering them. Major General Widdecke continually stressed to his commanders the importance of "detailed indoctrination and frequent reindoctrination" of all Marines in antiboobytrap methods.[65]

The division required every infantry battalion to conduct continuous anti-SFD training, including exercises on a boobytrap lane. Normally located near the battalion's headquarters, the boobytrap lane was a piece of typical terrain saturated with dummy versions of the most common SFDs. The 2d Battalion, 1st Marines set up its lane in "quite a bushy area" near the combat operations center. "And there are located there every conceivable type of boobytrap that we have run into . . . . These range from pitfalls . . . the ones ly-

ing on the deck, . . . the ones in the trees, and covers all types of ordnance."[66]

Supplementing and reinforcing unit training efforts, the 1st Engineer Battalion operated a Land Mine Warfare School at Camp Faulkner, its base southwest of Da Nang. Each month during 1970, 300-400 Marines representing most units of the division, took the school's intensive three-day course. These Marines studied boobytraps and countermeasures in detail and practiced on a complete and up-to-date boobytrap lane which accurately incorporated dummy replicas of the most commonly encountered SFD. The eight NCO instructors at the school continually monitored field reports of new devices and added either disarmed and captured specimens or their own duplicates to the boobytrap lane. "More often than not," an instructor reported, "our first eyewitness account of Charlie's newest gimmick is from one of our students." The engineers developed a wary respect for VC ingenuity, pointing out that "Charlie will mine everything and usually does." To their own students, they emphasized, "While in the field, there's no substitute for alertness, caution and a suspicious attitude."

To extend its reach to Marines who could not attend the three-day course, the mine warfare school regularly sent two-man contact teams out to 1st Marine Division units. These teams presented a two-hour course tailored to the needs of the organization, concentrating, for example, on road mines for a motor transport battalion and boobytraps for an infantry unit. By the end of 1970, the teams had instructed a total of 5,912 Marines.[67]

On 1 August 1970, as part of the preparations for Keystone Robin Alpha, the division closed the mine warfare school to everyone but members of the 1st Engineer Battalion, although the contact teams continued to visit all units. With the slowdown of redeployments, the division reopened the school to all personnel in October, offering a five-day course for classes of 50 students at a time. Between 12 and 26 February 1971, as the 1st Engineer Battalion prepared to stand down, the school moved from Camp Faulkner to the division headquarters cantonment. The engineer battalion redeployed during March, but its Company A, left behind for inclusion in the 3d MAB, continued to conduct the school and dispatch contact teams until 30 April, when it turned the facility over to the 196th Brigade.[68]

All of the training and command attention apparently produced results. In 1969, the ratio of boobytraps found and destroyed to boobytraps inadvertantly detonated, the division's principal measure of success on this problem, was 1.83 to 1. The year's average for 1970 increased to 1.96 to 1. For the first three months of 1971, the overall average rose to 2.77 to 1.[69]

Contributing to these encouraging ratios were innumerable instances of Marine coolheadedness and courage. On 22 October 1970, the 3d Platoon, Company H, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines was moving through the Que Sons during Operation Imperial Lake.[70] The platoon halted for a rest along a trail. Its Navy corpsman, Hospitalman Second Class Randall L. Hackett, sat down beside a tree, relaxed, and looked around. To his horror, he discovered that "two feet off the ground attached to a tree I was leaning against was a canister full of Composition B [explosive] with its detonator under my foot." Hackett kept his head. Remaining absolutely motionless, he whispered to the Marine next to him that he was sitting on a boobytrap and to quietly tell the company commander, Captain John W. Moffett, who was accompanying the platoon on the operation.

Captain Moffett carefully made his way to Hackett, looking him and the trap over. Since Hackett's foot was pressing on the detonator and the device had not exploded, Moffett and the corpsman decided it must have a pressure-release trigger. After placing flak jackets around the mine to absorb some of the blast if it went off, Moffett gingerly put his hand on the detonator and applied pressure. Hackett then took his foot off, rolled away, and scurried to cover. Moffett put a rock on the detonator and in turn jumped back. The device did not explode, and the Marines were able to destroy it.

Other Marines were not as skillful or fortunate. Too often, men forgot their training or neglected basic precautions. These lapses, according to Lieutenant General Nickerson, were almost inevitable under combat conditions. "You can only go so far, so many days," he observed, "before you get careless, you get tired.

. . . If you've been a grunt you know you get to the point where you just don't give a damn. When you get to that point you are starting to make mistakes."[71]

During 1970, in spite of improving discovery-to-detonation ratios, the 1st Marine Division lost 1,868 Marines killed or severely wounded by boobytraps. The toll continued into 1971. On 10 January 1971 a CUPP unit from Company G, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines and a QRF platoon from Company E of the same battalion were sweeping a hamlet just south of the Ba Ren Bridge. A Marine detonated a boobytrap made from a 60mm mortar shell; the blast wounded two Marines. The QRF command helicopter, carrying the battalion executive officer, Major Cornelius H. Ram, and the commanders of Companies E and G, landed to pick up the injured men. Major Ram and Captain Douglas O. Ford of Company E left the aircraft to help load the wounded. As they did so, they set off a second 60mm mortar round SFD, which immediately killed Captain Ford and mortally wounded Major Ram.[72]

With such incidents fresh in their memories, Marines left Quang Nam with the frustrating knowledge that they had contained, rather than defeated, the enemy in the boobytrap war. Brigadier General Simmons, the assistant division commander, concluded: "The 1st Marine Division's strenuous efforts—including troop indoctrination, land mine warfare school, contact teams, and mine and boobytrap dogs—did not solve the problem. The best we can conclude," he said, "is that these efforts greatly reduced what might have been the casualty figures if they had not been vigorously pursued."[73]

PART V
SUPPORTING THE TROOPS

CHAPTER 15

Fixed-Wing Air Operations, 1970-1971

1st MAW Organization, Strength, and Deployment—Coming to Terms with Single Management
Attacking the Ho Chi Minh Trail—Air Support Trends in Military Region 1—Controlling Air Support

1st MAW Organization, Strength, and Deployment

At the beginning of 1970, MACV had about 2,500 American fixed-wing aircraft and 3,600 helicopters of various types at its disposal. Of these, 261 fixed-wing aircraft and 241 helicopters belonged to the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.[1]

The fixed-wing aircraft of the 1st MAW, with the exception of one squadron, were concentrated at two bases in I Corps. At Da Nang, where the wing headquarters and air control groups were also located, Colonel Neal E. Heffernan's Marine Aircraft Group (MAG) 11 included four jet squadrons: Marine All-Weather Attack Squadrons (VMA[AW]s) 225 and 242, Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron (VMFA) 542, and Marine Composite Reconnaissance Squadron (VMCJ) 1. Two other fixed-wing groups flew from Chu Lai. MAG-12, first under Colonel Paul B. Henley, then commanded by Colonel James R. Weaver, consisted of Marine Attack Squadrons (VMAs) 211, 223, and 311. MAG-13, commanded by Colonel Thomas E. Murphree, included VMFAs -115, -112, and -314. The fighter/attack squadrons were all equipped with the McDonnell-Douglas F-4B Phantom II; the attack squadrons flew the versatile McDonnell-Douglas A-4E Skyhawk; while the all-weather attack squadrons used Grumman A-6A Intruders. VMCJ-1 had a mixed complement of RF-4B Phantom IIs, modified for aerial reconnaissance and photography, and EA-6A Intruders with sophisticated electronic warfare devices.

The helicopters of the 1st MAW were also divided between two airfields at the beginning of 1970, but all belonged to a single aircraft group, Colonel James P. Bruce's MAG-16, which had its headquarters at Marble Mountain Air Facility. Both Marine light helicopter squadrons (HMLs) of the group, HML-167 with Bell UH-1E Hueys and HML-367 with Bell AH-1G Cobras, were based at Marble Mountain. Two medium helicopter squadrons, HMMs -263 and-364, also flew from Marble Mountain, as did the two heavy helicopter squadrons, HMHs -361 and -463, and Marine Observation Squadron (VMO) 2, the one MAG-16 fixed-wing squadron with its North American OV-10A Broncos. At Phu Bai, HMMs -161 and -262 remained after the recent dissolution of MAG-36. All the medium helicopter squadrons were now equipped with Boeing CH-46D twin-rotor Sea Knights, while the heavy squadrons had replaced most of their Sikorsky CH-53A Sea Stallions with more powerful CH-53Ds.

A number of other aircraft, not in the regular operating squadrons, were attached to the 1st MAW. Five aging Douglas C-117Ds were employed by headquarters and maintenance squadrons for a variety of missions. H&MS-11 operated 12 TA-4Fs, two-seater trainer versions of the A-4 Skyhawk, for reconnaissance and forward air control missions. Under H&MS-17, three Grumman US-2Bs were used for aerial monitoring of sensors. A detachment of four Lockheed KC-130F Hercules refueler-transports, from Marine Aerial Refueler/Transport Squadron (VMGR) 152 on Okinawa, flew aerial refueling, troop and cargo transport, and flare-drop missions from Da Nang Airbase.*

Major General William G. Thrash, commander of the wing at the beginning of 1970, had flown with the 1st MAW in two previous wars. A native Georgian who earned his naval aviator's wings in early 1942, Thrash won a Distinguished Flying Cross and five Air Medals with the wing in the Pacific during World War II. In Korea, Thrash, then a lieutenant colonel with MAG-12, received the Silver Star for gallantry in action before being shot down, captured, and held prisoner for two years by the Chinese Communists. Thrash was promoted to major general in January 1967. After a tour as Commanding General, MCAS El Toro/Commander, Marine Corps Air Bases, Western Area, he took command of the 1st MAW in July 1969, relieving Major General Charles S. Quilter.

Thrash had taken over when the wing was still adjusting to MACV's imposition of single management of fixed-wing aircraft while at the same time the wing's system for controlling helicopters was under sharp criticism from many Marine ground commanders. Described by a subordinate as "a charmer" and "ex-

*Also based at Da Nang were over 200 U.S. Air Force aircraft of the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing and the 41st Wing, 1st Vietnamese Air Force Air Division. The latter unit included two fighter, two helicopter, and one liaison/observation squadrons, with 122 aircraft.

tremely intelligent"[2] he devoted much of his first six months in command to improving the working relationship between the wing and the Marine divisions. Brigadier General Dulacki, then III MAF Chief of Staff, recalled:

> I've never seen a commander operate the way he does, from the standpoint of getting the aviation message across. General Thrash made it a point to visit all the battalions, all the regiments. If they have a problem, he'll go out and talk to them . . . . He has visited the Army units; his group commanders have; his squadron commanders have. And . . . they have just knocked themselves out to support the ground forces in every way they can . . . . This attitude has permeated his entire command . . . .[3]

By the end of 1969, Thrash's campaign to improve air-ground teamwork appeared to be succeeding. Major General George S. Bowman, Jr., a Marine then serving as Deputy Commanding General, XXIV Corps, informed General McCutcheon late in December:

> Here in III MAF we have a very fine relationship between our Ground and Air. . . . [Thrash] spends a good deal of time to make it so. He is bending every effort to use more of the air capability in support of the ground effort. And I mean this from a planning point of view, and not just having it available should someone call up . . . .[4]

General Thrash also oversaw a steady diminution of 1st MAW strength. During January and February 1970, HMH-361, VMFA-542, and VMFA-223 were transferred from Vietnam to MCAS, Santa Ana and MCAS, El Toro. MAG-12, commanded by Colonel James R. Weaver, with its headquarters and support squadrons and VMA-211, was transferred to MCAS, Iwakuni. These changes were accomplished as part of Keystone Bluejay. The withdrawals permitted the transfer of VMO-2 from Marble Mountain to Da Nang, a field more suitable for its operations, and once there the observation squadron became part of MAG-11. The removal of the OV-10As and the redeployment of HMH-361 made room at Marble Mountain for HMMs -161 and -262, which now moved there from Phu Bai, completing the concentration of all the wing's helicopters at one base. At Chu Lai, VMA-311, the last Marine A-4E squadron in Vietnam, was transferred from MAG-12 to MAG-13. By the end of March, the 1st MAW had been reduced to two fixed-wing and one helicopter group, a total of 174 planes and 212 helicopters.[5]

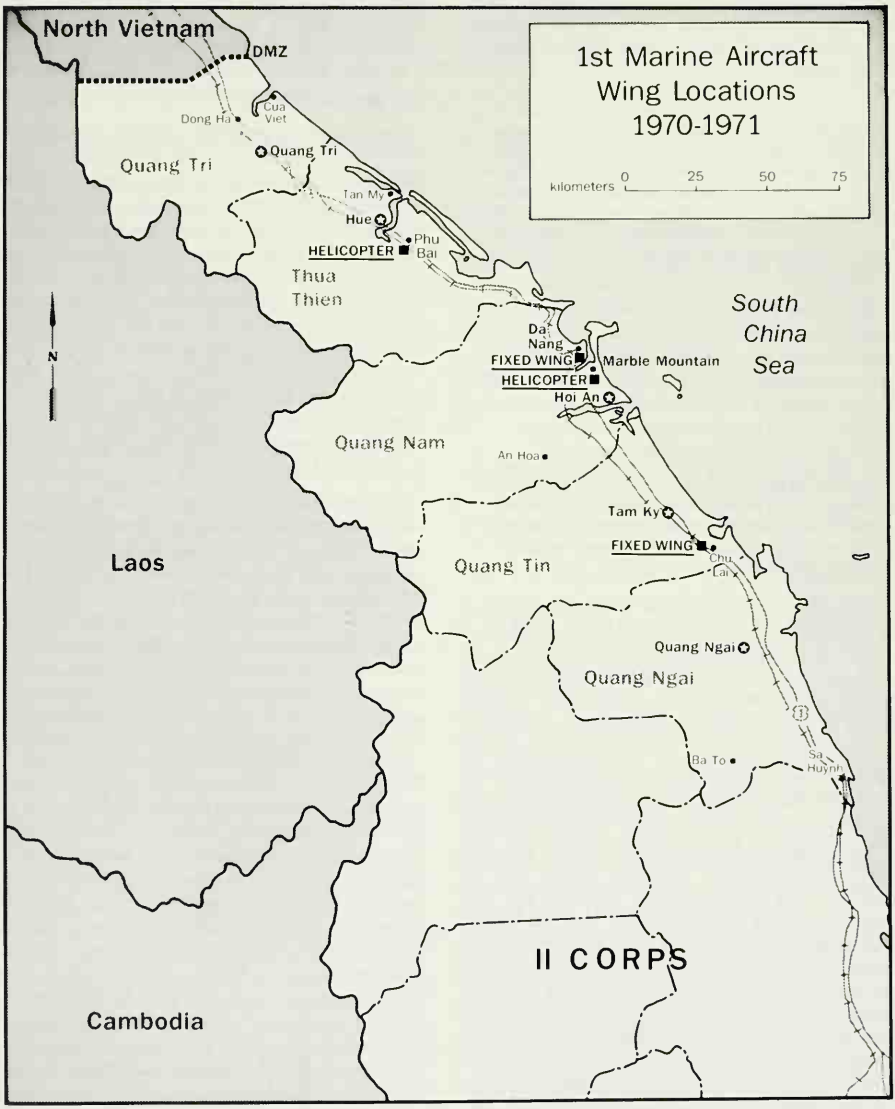
The wing, more than other III MAF elements, felt the disruptive impact of repeated changes in plans for the Keystone Robin Alpha redeployment.* Initially, the Marines planned to remove six squadrons in this withdrawal: VMCJ-1, VMA(AW)-242, VMFAs -122 and -314, and HMMs -161 and -262. They also intended to redeploy MAG-13, with its headquarters and support elements, and close Chu Lai Airbase.

These plans were quickly changed. MACV and XXIV Corps forced retention of VMFA-314 and HMM-262 to assure adequate jet and helicopter support for I Corps; they also objected to the proposed withdrawal of VMCJ-1. III MAF particularly wanted to remove the latter squadron. Large in manpower, VMCJ-1 had continual difficulty keeping its complicated equipment in working order. It flew most of its photographic reconnaissance and electronic countermeasures missions in support of Seventh Air Force and Seventh Fleet operations over Laos and North Vietnam rather than Marine forces in South Vietnam. Emphasizing the logistic costs of keeping the squadron in South Vietnam, III MAF finally persuaded MACV to let VMCJ-1 leave.

All these changes in plan occurred in mid-June. In August, with the Keystone Robin Alpha redeployment already under way, including extensive transfer of men and equipment between squadrons, MACV and III MAF decided to put VMFA-314 back in the withdrawal. The Joint Chiefs of Staff had restricted the number of monthly fighter-attack sorties, so the additional Marine jets were no longer needed in Vietnam. This meant that personnel and material had to be shifted again.[6]

Eventually, VMCJ-1, VMFAs -122 and -314, VMA(AW)-242, HMM-161, and MAG-13 with its headquarters and support squadrons left Vietnam in Keystone Robin Alpha. VMFA-115 and VMA-311 moved to Da Nang and joined MAG-11. In October, the last Marine aviation elements left Chu Lai, and control of that airfield passed to the U.S. Army. By 1 November, all of the remaining wing units, with the exception of two air support radar teams (ASRTs) deployed in northern I Corps, had been drawn into the Da Nang area. The wing, now under Major General Alan J. Armstrong, who had relieved Thrash on 2 July, consisted of two aircraft groups: MAG-11 under Colonel Albert C. Pommerenk, and MAG-16 commanded by Colonel Lewis C. Street III. Pommerenk's

*For a full account of the planning for this and other redeployment phases and for the formation of the 3d MAB, see Chapter 3.


1st Marine Aircraft Wing Locations 1970-1971
kilometers 0 25 50 75
North Vietnam
DMZ
Cua Viet
Dong Ha
Quang Tri
Quang Tri
Tan My
Hue
HELICOPTER
Phu Bai
Thua Thien
South China Sea
Da Nang
FIXED WING
HELICOPTER
Marble Mountain
Hoi An
N
Quang Nam
An Hoa
Tam Ky
FIXED WING
Chu Lai
Laos
Quang Tin
Quang Ngai
Quang Ngai
Ba To
Sa Huynh
II CORPS
Cambodia

group included the remaining 81 fixed-wing aircraft; MAG-16 controlled the 149 remaining helicopters.*

Between January and mid-April 1971, the 1st MAW headquarters group, Marine Wing Headquarters Group (MWHG) 1, and the bulk of the wing's air control group, Marine Air Control Group (MACG) 18, redeployed to Iwakuni in Keystone Robin Charlie. In the same redeployment, VMFA-115 went to Iwakuni, and HMM-364 and VMO-2 left Vietnam for the United States. On 14 April, the headquarters of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing was formally transferred to Iwakuni, where Brigadier General Robert F. Conley, who had commanded 1st MAW (Rear), assumed command of the wing, replacing Armstrong who remained at Da Nang with the 3d MAB.

MAG-11, with VMA-311, VMA(AW)-225 and H&MS-11, which now had four OV-10As** as well as its TA-4Fs, constituted the fixed-wing air element of the 3d MAB. MAG-16, the brigade helicopter group, consisted of HMLs -167 and -367, HMMs -262 and -263, and HMH-463. Marine Air Support Squadron (MASS) 3, formerly part of MACG-18, remained at Da Nang as part of MAG-11, to operate the brigade direct air support center (DASC) and furnish three ASRTs. A detachment of 20 Marines from Marine Air Control Squadron (MACS) 4, which had redeployed in February, stayed on Monkey Mountain to man the Marine Tactical Data Communications Center (TDCC), an automated facility which linked the Air Force and Navy aircraft tracking systems and antiair warfare direction. Air combat operations under the 3d MAB ended on 7 May. By 22 June, all Marine aviation units had left Vietnam. Only the TDCC detachment continued operating on Monkey Mountain. It would stay until Marine squadrons returned to Vietnam to help stem the North Vietnamese invasion in 1972.

Coming to Terms with Single Management

Since March 1968, the Commanding General, Seventh Air Force, in his capacity as Deputy ComUSMACV for Air Operations, had exercised "mission direction" of all 1st MAW fixed-wing strike and reconnaissance aircraft. The Air Force commander performed the daily function of "fragging" these Marine airplanes, that is assigning them to specific missions in South Vietnam, North Vietnam, or Laos.*

From its inception in a letter from General William C. Westmoreland, then ComUSMACV, to the Commanding General, III MAF, on 7 March 1968, this system, usually called "single management," had met continuing Marine Corps opposition and criticism. Westmoreland had justified its imposition as necessary to assure adequate air support for the Army divisions reinforcing the Marines in I Corps during the Communist Tet Offensive and siege of Khe Sanh, and as a means for improving the general efficiency of United States tactical airpower. In his 7 March instructions, he assured III MAF that "consistent with the tactical situation," Marine aircraft normally would continue to be assigned to support Marine ground units. In spite of these rationalizations and reassurances, most Marines interpreted the establishment of single management as a thinly veiled Air Force bid for operational control of their fixed-wing aviation. They bitterly recalled their frustrations in the Korean conflict, when the Marine air-ground team had been broken up, with the 1st MAW under Fifth Air Force control and the 1st Marine Division under the Eighth Army.[7]

During 1968, Lieutenant General Robert E. Cushman, Jr., the III MAF commander, waged a persistent campaign to reverse Westmoreland's directive. He had the full support of the Commandant, General Leonard F. Chapman, Jr., who appealed the issue to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Marine Corps leaders declared that the imposition of single management had reduced the responsiveness and effectiveness of tactical air power in I Corps. They insisted that single management represented a *de facto* transfer of operational control of Marine fixed-wing air units to the Air Force, destroying the integrity of the Marine Corps' air-ground team and violating both the law establishing Marine Corps organization and the Inter-Service agreements on the conduct of joint operations. Repeatedly, the

*Both MAGs had changed commanders previously during the year. In MAG-11, Colonel Robert N. Heffernan had been replaced by Colonel Grover S. Stewart, Jr. on 19 February 1970. Colonel Stewart in turn had been relieved by Colonel Pommerenk on 19 June. In MAG-16, Colonel Haywood R. Smith had taken over from Colonel Bruce on 7 March and was in turn replaced by Colonel Street on 4 October.

**These aircraft had been transferred from the departing VMO-2. H&MS-11 ComdC, Mar71.

*The daily orders assigning aircraft to fly particular missions are known as fragmentary orders; hence the slang verb "frag" as applied to air operations. Until March 1968, the 1st MAW had "fragged" all of its own aircraft and had reported to the Seventh Air Force each day the number of fixed-wing sorties not needed to support Marine operations. The Seventh Air Force could then use these extra sorties for its own purposes. Under the new system, the wing reported all of its daily fixed-wing sorties, except those of light observation craft, for Seventh Air Force assignment.

Marine Corps Historical Collection

A McDonnell Douglas A4E Skyhawk from VMA-322, as indicated by the call signs QR on its tail, is shown in flight. The Skyhawks were the backbone of Marine close air support during the Vietnam War, carrying an extensive and versatile combat load.

Marine Corps proposed changes in the MACV system which in effect would return control of Marine fixed-wing aircraft to III MAF. General Westmoreland and his successor, General Abrams, stood firm in their defense of single management, and a majority of the Joint Chiefs supported them. Emotion ran high on both sides, to the point where Westmoreland later declared that single management was "the one issue . . . during my service in Vietnam that prompted me to consider resigning. I was unable to accept that parochial consideration might take precedence over my command responsibilities and prudent use of assigned resources."[8]

Although Marine frontal attacks on single management proved fruitless, partly because the Army strongly favored the system, which provided more and better Air Force support for its divisions in Vietnam, III MAF and the 1st MAW were able gradually to modify the system through informal working arrangements with the Seventh Air Force. Lieutenant General Nickerson,

who took command of III MAF early in 1969, and Major General Thrash, who assumed command of the wing a few months later, both took the position that single management was a fact of life and that the Marines should try to recover as much control of their aircraft as was possible under the system. General George Brown, USAF, who commanded the Seventh Air Force throughout 1969 and most of 1970, responded favorably to this pragmatic, conciliatory Marine approach.[9]

By mid-1970, III MAF and the 1st MAW had recovered, in fact if not in principle, much of their ability to assign missions to Marine strike and reconnaissance aircraft. Colonel Stanley G. Dunwiddie, Jr., commander of Marine Air Control Group (MACG) 18 reported:

> Over the past year, although it was not officially recognized and not done in an overt fashion, the wing gradually began to frag more and more of its own aircraft again . . . although the fabric of single management still exists . . . . "[10]

The 1st MAW, for example, had gained the right to deduct the sorties required for landing zone preparation and other special missions in support of Marine forces from the number reported available to the Seventh Air Force. Further, the number of Marine sorties turned over to the Air Force was calculated on a rate of one sortie per day for each aircraft, but Marine squadrons normally flew at a rate of more than one sortie per plane per day. By agreement with the Seventh Air Force, III MAF could "frag" these additional sorties in support of its own operations.

The wing also exerted some supervision over the sorties that it surrendered to Air Force "mission direction." Customarily, the Seventh Air Force assigned all Marine aircraft used within South Vietnam to missions in I Corps/MR 1. The 1st MAW, through its liaison officer at Seventh Air Force Headquarters in Saigon, could recommend which Marine aircraft groups or squadrons should be employed on particular tasks. In fact, during late 1969 and the first part of 1970, the chief of the Strike Plans Branch of Seventh Air Force Headquarters, in charge of all aircraft task assignments, was a Marine lieutenant colonel. Marines declared jokingly: "Single management works great as long as the Marine Corps runs it."[11]

As a result of these developments, according to General McCutcheon:

> . . . The modus operandi . . . relative to fragging of Marine aircraft is about as follows. With three F-4 squadrons, two A-6 squadrons and one A-4 squadron we had a total of 89 aircraft assigned. This would provide 89 sorties per day at a 1.0 sorties rate. From this 89 it was agreed that we could withold 16 special sorties for radar beacon and LZ prep hops. This left 73 which we identified or made available to 7th Air Force. By agreement with them, they would frag 13 out of country, 36 for preplans and 24 for the alert pad which could be scrambled by Horn DASC. The net result of this was that in effect the Wing really controlled the 16 specials and 24 alert pad sorties, plus any add-ons that were generated. These usually amounted to nine to 27 per day depending on whether the sorties rate was 1.1 or 1.3.[12]*

While the Marines had thus been able to modify single management in practice and keep their air-ground team substantially intact, these arrangements had no formal, written basis in either MACV directives or Inter-Service doctrines for joint operations. MACV Directive Number 95.4, prescribing rules for all aspects of air operations, had been issued in 1965 and never fundamentlly modified. In December 1968, MACV had proposed a revision incorporating the basic principles of single management and including a new term, "operational direction," to describe the Seventh Air Force's relationship to Marine fixed-wing aircraft. III MAF, in a sharply worded response, refused to concur in the draft, and MACV had abandoned the revision attempt. The only official description of single management on paper was General Westmoreland's letter of 7 March 1968 to General Cushman, prescribing a system which by 1970 had been altered extensively. Both to protect the Marines' position in Vietnam and to establish a favorable precendent for application in future joint operations, III MAF during 1970 sought an opportunity to incorporate a description of single management as it was actually working into a revision of MACV Directive 95.4.[13]

The III MAF commander, Lieutenant General McCutcheon, was uniquely suited to this task. During 1965, as J-3, CinCPac, he had helped develop the initial MACV Directive 95.4 and then had implemented it as 1st MAW commander. He had been Deputy Chief of Staff (Air) at HQMC throughout the post-1968 single management dispute. McCutcheon had decided that, because both MACV and the Army were benefiting from single management in Vietnam, the Marine Corps could not hope to obtain formal abolition of the system. Instead, he declared with characteristic bluntness, "I am working . . . on the philosophy that single management is here, and the

*Horn Direct Air Support Center was a combined USAF/USMC/VNAF facility located at Camp Horn. It was created in 1968 and was the senior tactical air control agency for I Corps/MR1.

way to beat it is to join it and outmanage them."[14] In practical terms, this meant trying to retain as much Marine control of fixed-wing aircraft as possible within the rules. It also meant restating at every opportunity the principle that operational control of all 1st MAW elements remained with the commander of III MAF. MACV, in its statements on single management, had always acknowledged III MAF's command and control over Marine air, as well as other Marine forces in Vietnam. McCutcheon simply took MACV at its word on this point. He continually emphasized that the commander of the Seventh Air Force exercised limited tasking authority over 1st MAW aircraft in his capacity as ComUSMACV's deputy for air, not as an Air Force commander.[15]

McCutcheon closed on his goal when MACV revised its Directive Number 10.11, governing general command relations in Vietnam, after XXIV Corps became the senior U.S. headquarters in MR 1. McCutcheon and his staff proposed for inclusion in the document, a statement that the commander of III MAF would "exercise operational control of 1st Marine Aircraft Wing." He would make available "to Deputy Commander, USMACV for Air Operations, strike and reconnaissance air assets and tactical air control system for mission direction." MACV and Seventh Air Force accepted this proposal. McCutcheon declared: "My worst fears on this subject have been taken care of by the rewrite of 10.11. That shows I still have OpCon."[16]

In early July 1970, the MACV staff again began revising Directive 95.4, and General Abrams ordered III MAF to submit proposed changes. The III MAF submission, sent to MACV on 6 July, reaffirmed that the Commanding General, III MAF "will exercise operational control of U.S. Marine Corps aviation resources and will conduct offensive and defensive air operations" while making strike and reconnaissance aircraft available to the Commanding General, Seventh Air Force, as Deputy ComUSMACV for Air, for "mission direction." Giving formal sanction to the practical arrangement already in effect, the Marines' draft permitted III MAF to withhold from Seventh Air Force direction "those assets necessary to support Marine Corps peculiar operations, e.g., . . . helo escort and landing zone preparation fire."

Reflecting McCutcheon's strategy for "outmanaging" single management, the most important proposed III MAF changes centered on an attempt to both clarify and restrict the authority of the Seventh Air Force under the system. The Marines did this by providing a definition of the terms "mission direction" and "operational direction," both of which MACV had used in relation to single management. Neither of these terms had an established definition in the United States military lexicon. III MAF proposed that "Mission/Operation Direction" be defined as "the authority delegated to ComUSMACV's Deputy Commander for Air Operations (CG 7th AF) to assign specific fixed-wing air tasks to the Commanding General, III Ma-

A North American OV-10A Bronco is seen in flight. The Broncos were introduced into Vietnam in 1968 for forward observation and to control close air support. The OV-10A Broncos could stay on station for three to four hours at altitudes of over 7,500 feet.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A568683

rine Amphibious Force, on a periodic basis as implementation of a basic mission assigned by ComUSMACV."[17]

McCutcheon explained the significance of this language in limiting Air Force authority and protecting Marine interests:

> Operational control comprises four essential elements: composition of subordinate forces, the assignment of tasks, the designation of objectives, and the authoritative direction necessary to accomplish the mission. By our definition mission direction is restricted to one element only, namely, the assignment of tasks. CG III MAF therefore retains the other elements of operational control. . . . A basic mission or task assigned by ComUSMACV to CG III MAF is to conduct offensive and defensive tactical air operations. Directive 95.4 now delegates to Deputy Commander MACV for Air, i.e., Commander 7th Air Force, responsibility to assign specific fixed-wing air tasks to CG III MAF on a periodic basis, that is in the weekly and daily frags, as an extension of the basic mission of offensive tactical air support assigned directly by MACV . . . .[18]

The Seventh Air Force and MACV both accepted the Marine draft. Colonel Richard H. Rainforth, the 1st MAW liaison officer at Seventh Air Force Headquarters, declared that the revised Directive 95.4 "was written completely by Marine Corps input. We wrote it the way we wanted it, and the Air Force bought it." Issued by MACV on 15 August, the new directive reiterated that III MAF retained operational control of all Marine aircraft and included the provision for withholding specialized Marine support sorties from the Seventh Air Force. It incorporated almost word for word the Marines' definition of "Mission/Operational Direction."*[19]

McCutcheon's proposals and the revised Directive 95.4 met initial criticism at HQMC as a formal surrender to single management, but most Marines quickly realized that they had gained more than they had given up. Looking to protect the Marine Corps' future, General McCutcheon concluded that 95.4, as published in 1970, "will stand us in good stead later as the JCS or unified commands research the subject and look for some way of explaining command relationships with air."[20] Major General Homer S. Hill, McCutcheon's successor as DC/S (Air), seconded McCutcheon's view:

> We have set a precedent whereby the Air Force had agreed in writing, to the Wing Commander retaining operational control of Marine aircraft . . . . We have inserted the MAF Commander in the chain which will prevent what the 7th Air Force was trying to do with the 1st MAW upon the advent of single management . . . . We may not always agree with the allocation of Marine forces under mission direction, but we sure as hell have a strong Marine voice that can go straight to the boss and not fiddle around with the Air Force.[21]

Throughout the rest of 1970 and until the last Marine squadrons redeployed in 1971, III MAF and the 1st MAW worked harmoniously with the Seventh Air Force. General Lucius D. Clay, Jr., USAF, who replaced General Brown as Seventh Air Force commander in September 1970, was acquainted with both Lieutenant General McCutcheon and Major General Armstrong from previous joint assignments. "I could go talk to them as a person," Clay recalled, and "just say, 'Hey, fellows, we've got a problem . . . . Let's work it [out].'" The Marines, in turn, found Clay, in General Robertson's words, "very fine" to work with. "I think he had great respect for Marine aviators and Marines themselves," Robertson declared, "and the relationship we had, and the wing had with Seventh Air Force during my time . . . couldn't have been finer." Marine and Air Force commanders alike approached single management from a practical, rather than a doctrinal standpoint. Their concern, as General Clay put it, was to make "a very honest effort . . . to put the . . . ordnance where the people wanted it."[22]

Sortie allocations followed the practices developed during the previous year and the MACV Directive 95.4. Each evening, General Clay and his staff, including Colonel Stephen G. Warren,* who had relieved Colonel Rainforth as 1st MAW liaison officer, would "sit down and plan our sorties for next day." According to General Clay, "Every night the Marines would say, 'We are going to . . . give you X, Y, or Z sorties today. We're going to retain A, B, and C for some

*The exact MACV wording was: "Mission/Operational Direction. The authority delegated to DEPCOMUSMACV for Air Operations (Cdr, 7th AF) to assign specific fixed-wing air tasks to the CG, III MAF, on a periodic basis as implementation of a basic mission assigned by COMUSMACV." MACV Directive 95.4, dtd 15Aug70, paragraph 3c.

*Colonel Warren, who had served five previous exchange tours or duty assignments with the Air Force beginning with the Korean War, was instructed by General McCutcheon to "act as a catalyst to ameliorate the enmity between Marine aviation and Seventh Air Force." Warren later observed: "If we Marines did 'outmanage' single management it was only with full awareness of General Lucius Clay and Major General Ernest Hardin . . . . My daily association with them was most pleasurable and rewarding and they quickly came to understand the entire problem of the Marine Air/Ground concept when involved in combined and joint operations." Col Stephen G. Warren, Comments on draft MS, 11Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File).

direct support activities, but beyond that these are yours'." Colonel Warren, who represented the Marine Corps on a daily basis in negotiations with Seventh Air Force, recalled that the real facilitators were Generals Clay, McCutcheon, and Hardin who created "the high degree of amity in the pragmatic tactical operations" associated with single management.[23] If disagreements arose, they were settled immediately by telephone calls from Seventh Air Force to 1st MAW Headquarters at Da Nang. The Marines had no difficulty obtaining all the fixed-wing support they wanted for their own operations. "When we had a big show for the division," Armstrong reported, the Seventh Air Force "never, never argued with pulling people off the runs into Laos or anywhere else to give us exactly what we wanted." Clay, on the other hand, felt confident that, if he needed the withheld Marine sorties to meet a major emergency, Armstrong "would say, 'They're yours; go'."[24]

By the time 1st MAW Headquarters redeployed in April 1971, Seventh Air Force/1st MAW relations had reached such a peak of amicability that General Clay nominated the wing for an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Combat "V." "They had done a hell of a job," he said later, "and I thought . . . they deserved some form of recognition." Through direct telephone calls to the Chief of Staff and Secretary of the Air Force, Clay obtained permission to make the award. He brought the streamer with him to the 1st MAW departure ceremony at Da Nang on 14 April. There, Major General Armstrong informed Clay that the Navy Department had not approved acceptance of the award on the grounds that it might duplicate a similar Navy unit citation for which the wing was being considered. This meant that the wing could not attach the streamer to its colors. Nevertheless, at the departure parade, General Clay "gave the streamer to Al Armstrong and read the citation, saying, 'This is a proposed citation that is being submitted' and let it go at that . . . . Then it turned out it was never awarded."*[25]

While harmony and cooperation prevailed in the field, the doctrinal issue was far from settled. General Chapman emphasized this fact on 14 October, in a letter to the commanders of the two FMFs and to the Marine Corps Development and Education Command. Evaluating the revised MACV Directive 95.4, Chapman declared that the directive, while it "clearly and decisively protects some of the Marine Corps principles with minimal derogation of policy," represented only "a special accommodation to a peculiar command relationship." In principle, Marines must continue to insist on "Marine aviation assets being tasked in support of Marine ground requirements prior to commitment of air assets to other missions," and that only "air assets in excess of requirements for Marine ground support" be committed "in general support of a joint force."[26]

In Vietnam, the Marines had come to terms with single management and had modified it to assure continued support of their ground forces by Marine aviation, yet this favorable outcome had resulted in large part from circumstances, and from the ability and willingness of Marine and Air Force commanders on the scene to accommodate each other's interests through informal working relationships. In the end, General Armstrong suggested, doctrines and regulations always would give way to tactical necessity as perceived by the joint commander:

> When we really come down to it . . . when you get in a tough situation where decisions have to be made, they're going to be made on merit. And I don't give a damn what's in writing. You could never hold COMUSMACV, for example, to any agreement. If he's got a tactical situation that dictates that he does something or he had to do something, on its merit he's going to do it. And you can't take that away from a commander by writing in a bunch of ironclad rules.[27]

The debate on whether or not the Marine Corps' long-term interests in maintaining the integrity of the air-ground team was damaged in Vietnam will, doubtless, continue for years. The assessment of senior commanders in Vietnam in 1970-1971, however, was that the single management controversy had little effect on Marine air's ability to support the troops on the ground: "There certainly was no degradation of either our capabilities or our ability to do anything we wanted

*Under Navy regulations, no unit may receive more than one unit award for the same action or service. Unit awards from the U.S. Army or Air Force may be accepted by Navy or Marine units, but only with the concurrence of the Secretary of the Navy. This concurrence "is necessary to preclude dual recognition of those units for which the Navy Department is considering or has already approved a unit award." Department of the Navy, *United States Navy and Marine Corps Awards Manual*, SecNavInst 1650.1D, CH-3, dtd 19Aug71, Paragraphs 314.5 and 316.1. The current 1st Marine Aircraft Wing list of streamer entitlements include no unit award for the period September 1970 - April 1971, although the wing holds a Presidential Unit Citation for Vietnam service 11May65-15Sep67 and a Vietnam Service Streamer with two Silver and two Bronze Stars for service between 11May65 and 14Apr71.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A422881

A heavily loaded and armed Marine McDonnell Douglas F4B Phantom is seen on a bombing run in Vietnam during January 1971. The Marine Phantom fighter/attack aircraft were introduced early into the Vietnam War in April 1965 in a close air support role.

to do," said General Armstrong. "If our ground guys wanted to do something, we told Seventh Air Force we'd like to have a light schedule of commitments and excess sorties to do something on our own within III MAF, and never, on any occasion, were we refused."[28]

Attacking the Ho Chi Minh Trail

After the United States stopped bombing North Vietnam in 1968, the American effort to hinder the movement of men and supplies into South Vietnam was concentrated on the southern panhandle of Laos, codenamed the Steel Tiger area. Here, the Ho Chi Minh Trail, a complicated network of trails and roads, crossed the western border of North Vietnam through four passes in the Annamite Mountains and then turned south, its innumerable branches leading to Communist base areas in South Vietnam. The North Vietnamese constantly repaired and extended these routes, in spite of American bombing. Over the elaborate trail and road network, enemy troops, fuel, and munitions flowed southward. Carried most of the way in a series of short hauls, with repeated changes of vehicles, each truck, or group of them, continually shuttled different loads over the same short stretch of road, almost always traveling by night. At various key points, troops could rest in hidden camps and supplies could be stored in carefully camouflaged depots.

The flow of enemy material through this system, and the American air effort to restrict it, was tied to the annual cycle of weather. Between October and February, the northeast monsoon brought relatively cool, foggy, rainy weather to coastal North Vietnam and northern South Vietnam. At the same time, the interior of Laos west of the Annamite Mountains experienced clear, dry days and nights. The North Vietnamese regularly took advanatage of this period to move large amounts of supplies through the passes into Laos. Most of the material sent south during a year entered the northern end of the Ho Chi Minh Trail at this time. The allies adjusted their air interdiction effort to the same schedule. During the winter northeast monsoon, when bad weather reduced flying and ground activity in South Vietnam, MACV allocated the majority of its tactical air and B-52 sorties to the Steel Tiger area. Then, as the summer southwest monsoon brought rain to Laos, and northern

South Vietnam entered its dry season, the air effort was gradually shifted back to support operations in South Vietnam.

Conforming to the seasonal ebb and flow of activity, MACV and the Seventh Air Force in October 1969 launched Operation Commando Hunt III, the second in a series of campaigns to disrupt the Laotian portion of the enemy supply line. United States Air Force, Navy, and Marine tactical aircraft and Air Force B-52s made intensive day and night attacks on vehicle parks, transfer and storage areas, fords, and passes. By January 1970, MACV was allotting 55 percent of all preplanned tactical air sorties and 65 percent of all ARC Light missions to Commando Hunt III.[29]

In addition to the attacks on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, American aircraft flew other missions over Laos and, to a limited extent, North Vietnam. Over northern Laos, American aircraft conducted Operation Barrel Roll, providing tactical air support to anti-Communist Laotian forces. This operation involved primarily Air Force and Navy planes. American aircraft also continued reconnaissance flights over North Vietnam. Early in 1970, the Joint Chiefs of Staff authorized short incursions into North Vietnamese airspace by aircraft conducting Commando Hunt III missions and permitted attacks on North Vietnamese surface-to-air missile (SAM) sites threatening B-52s flying into Laos.

At the beginning of 1970, the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing was providing 25-35 sorties per day in support of Commando Hunt III and other operations outside South Vietnam. While F-4Bs and A-4Es were conducting conventional bombing and strafing attacks in South Vietnam, most 1st MAW activity over Laos and North Vietnam was designed to exploit unique capabilities of Marine aircraft.[30]

The most distinctive Marine contribution to the Laos interdiction effort was Operation Commando Bolt, which exploited the all-weather capabilities of A-6A Intruders in night armed reconnaissance flights over the Ho Chi Minh Trail. These long-range twin-engine jets could carry as many as 22 500-pound bombs. Described by General McCutcheon as "the finest all-weather bombing aircraft in the world,"[31] they had elaborate radar and computer navigation and bomb-aiming systems. These systems could locate and attack small moving targets, making the A-6A ideal for night-time truck-hunting. The EA-6As also provided exceptional electronic jamming for strike missions into areas in Laos and North Vietnam which were heavily defended by antiaircraft artillery and surface-to-air missiles.

By early 1970, the A-6As were flying most of their missions under the guidance of the Air Force sensor readout station, which monitored seismic and acoustic sensors airdropped along the many branches of the Ho Chi Minh Trail.[32] An A-6A assigned to Commando Bolt would take off from Da Nang and fly to a preartranged point where it would orbit, awaiting a target assignment. As trucks, known as "movers," activated the sensors, the readout station would notify the Marine aircraft of the target location. The Marine aircrew would then feed this data into the A-6A's computer system and go in for a low-level attack. The A-6A proved effective as a truck destroyer. In the course of Commando Hunt III, MACV credited the Intruders with 977 trucks demolished or damaged in 1,486 sorties, an average of .66 trucks hit per sortie. Of the aircraft types used against the Ho Chi Minh Trail, only the Air Force AC-119, AC-123, and AC-130 gunships had a higher kills-to-sorties ratio.*

Marine Intruders making night bombing runs along the Ho Chi Minh Trail during late 1969 and early 1970 drew increasingly heavy antiaircraft fire. North Vietnamese gunners simply blazed away either at the sound of the aircraft or at the general area above where bombs were exploding. As a Marine pilot described it, the Communist strategy was to throw up "a tremendous volume of fire without stoppage from any gun that was able to deliver . . . fire in the immediate area . . . which was causing the A-6 some difficulties."[33]

To suppress this inaccurate but potentially dangerous flak, 1st MAW began sending an F-4B, codenamed appropriately Commando Bolt Assassin, to escort some of the patrolling A-6As. The crew of a F-4B, assigned the Assassin role, received the same briefing as the crew of the A-6A with which they were paired, then flew independently to orbit point, where the F-4B joined the A-6A and waited for a target. When the Intruder started its bombing run, the Phantom II followed in radar trail, armed with Zuni rockets and Rockeye II cluster bomb units (CBUs). The fighter-bomber crew watched for enemy gun flashes and attacked any Communist positions which opened fire. If the Intruder encountered no antiaircraft fire, which was infrequent, the F-4B expended its ordnance on the A-6A's target.

*U.S. aircraft were credited with destroying or damaging 9,839 Communist trucks on 15,777 sorties during Commando Hunt III. MACV ComdHist, 70, 1, ch. VI, pp. 95-96.

Initially, Da Nang-based VMFA-542 carried out this mission. After this squadron redeployed in March, VMFAs -115, -122, and -314 at Chu Lai took over.

For the Phantom II pilots, accompanying an A-6A night bombing run was no easy task. Captain Lawrence G. Karch, of VMFA-542, pointed out that "the A-6 had a terrain-following radar and . . . all the goodies to do all-weather night interdiction missions . . . . We don't . . . . Following this dude around right on the ground and then going in for a visual attack on a gun at night . . . it's really quite challenging."[34] Some Phantom crews complained that the Rockeye II was ineffective in night attacks because the bright flash when its casing opened warned enemy gunners to take cover; nevertheless, the F-4B escorts achieved their goal of flak suppression. After the assassin flights began, A-6A and F-4B pilots flying over Laos reported that NVA gunners either were not shooting at the Intruders or were firing only brief bursts.

Under the codename Playboy, Marines of H&MS-11, flying McDonnell-Douglas TA-4Fs, conducted daily low-level, high-speed, visual reconnaissance of sections of the Ho Chi Minh Trail where NVA antiaircraft fire forced slower observation craft to remain at high altitudes.[35] The TA-4F proved ideally suited to this dangerous mission. Its speed, small size, and maneuverability made it difficult for antiaircraft gunners to hit, and its two-place cockpit could accommodate an aerial observer. On a typical Playboy mission, a TA-4F would remain on station for about 40 minutes. It would fly along its assigned network of trails at altitudes of 200 to 2,000 feet at airspeeds between 450 and 550 miles per hour, constantly maneuvering up and down and from side to side to dodge hostile fire. After covering 10 or 15 miles of one route, the TA-4F would shift laterally to a different trail branch and follow it for a while. This tactic prevented the North Vietnamese from alerting batteries ahead of the TA-4F on its original flight path. The TA-4Fs were fired at on most of their missions and frequently were hit, but only one aircraft from H&MS-11 was shot down during 1970, and it was lost in South Vietnam. Occasionally, the Playboys, like Commando Bolt A-6As, flew with F-4B escorts for flak suppression.

While Air Force OV-10As, which remained on station for three or four hours at a time at altitudes above 7,500 feet, located large truck parks and storage areas and monitored the overall pattern of enemy activity, the TA-4Fs concentrated on smaller, hidden targets. Their crews regularly flew over the same portions of the trail system and developed the ability to spot subtle changes in foliage and topography, indicating enemy activity. They could locate individual, camouflaged trucks, bulldozers, and small supply dumps. While singly of minor importance, such sightings could form significant cumulative patterns. As a TA-4F pilot put it, "when you get into a particular area, [and] you'll find a truck or two trucks, or storage, or a few oil drums, . . . every day for a two-week period you know . . . that they've got a lot of stuff in there, and it's become a lucrative area to hit."[36]

The TA-4Fs could also call for and control air strikes, but, because of their relatively short time on station, normally preplanned air support was not assigned to them. Often the TA-4Fs worked in cooperation with the OV-10As, which usually had flights standing by. The Marine jets would make low-level turns to investigate areas the high-altitude observers thought might contain potential targets; then the OV-10As could direct follow-up strikes.

VMCJ-1 supported operations over Laos and North Vietnam with both intelligence and electronic countermeasure flights. The RF-4Bs of the squadron, supplementing the much larger Air Force reconnaissance effort, collected target information and photographed strike results. The Marine jets on the average flew two of the approximately 40 photographic missions conducted in Laos and North Vietnam each day by the Seventh Air Force. More important were the Marine EA-6As. With the Navy EA-6s based offshore on carriers, these were the only electronic warfare planes in Southeast Asia fast and maneuverable enough to accompany strike aircraft to a target. They flew day and night radar detection and jamming missions in support of Air Force and Navy as well as Marine air raids.[37]

While the allies possessed total command of the air during 1970-1971, North Vietnamese MIG fighters posed a continuing threat to aircraft operating over Laos, especially the B-52s. To deter MIG attacks, the Americans kept fighters on airborne alert over Laos (MIGCAP) and over the Navy carrier task force in the Tonkin Gulf (BARCAP). The F-4B squadrons of the 1st MAW drew their share of both MIGCAP and BARCAP assignments. Normally, a squadron committed most of its strength to this mission on a particular day or days during the month, keeping two aircraft orbiting on the patrol station over Laos or the carriers, with others ready on the airstrip to relieve or support them. The mission also required a KC-130F tanker to refuel

the fighters when they reached their patrol area, extending both the range and the time on station.

While these missions at times strained the 1st MAW's diminishing fighter-bomber capabilities, General Thrash considered BARCAP, in particular, to have compensating advantages. Thrash declared that participation in BARCAP "maintains our air-to-air proficiency as well as coordination with carrier task force operations," and "has the side benefit of maintaining cordial relations with the fleet."[38]

During the first half of 1970, 1st MAW operations over Laos and North Vietnam kept pace with the intensity of the air campaign. Aircraft of the wing flew an average of 785 Commando Hunt related sorties each month. These included 250 A-6A Commando Bolt sorties, 75 F-4B bombing missions, and 15 Playboy TA-4F flights. VMCJ-1 conducted an average of 40-50 photographic reconnaissance and 150 electronic warfare missions per month. The wing's monthly BARCAP contribution averaged 48 sorties, and some months the F-4Bs flew another 50 or 60 bomber escort and Commando Bolt Assassin missions.

During May and June, Marine air operations expanded into Cambodia, as American and South Vietnamese troops swept the enemy's border base areas. On 5 and 6 May, Phantom IIs of VMFAs -115 and -314 flew eight missions in support of Operation Binh Tay I, a large-scale incursion by the U.S. 4th Division and the 22d ARVN Division into a Communist base area 40 miles west of Pleiku. The Marine jets dropped 1,000-pound bombs to clear landing zones for allied heliborne assaults. Later in the month, supporting the same operation, MAG-13 Phantoms completed 26 direct and close air support sorties, attacking NVA and VC positions with napalm and 500-pound bombs. Marine air operations over Cambodia concluded in June with four flights by VMFA-314 to drop 500-pound delayed action bombs on a key ford.[39]

In mid-1970 the usual seasonal decline in American sorties against the Ho Chi Minh Trail began, the number falling from 10,966 in April to 6,242 in July and only 4,943 in August. Conforming to the pattern, the 1st MAW, with the concurrence of the Seventh Air Force, reallocated most of its fixed-wing sorties to support the I Corps/MR 1 summer offensive and participate in such large-scale 1st Marine Division operations as Pickens Forest and Imperial Lake. Redeployment of key Marine air units involved in the interdiction campaign further diminished 1st MAW operations outside South Vietnam.

The gradual removal of 1st MAW aircraft from Commando Hunt and related operations began in mid-June. On the 16th, as MAG-13 and two of the Marines' remaining three F-4B squadrons prepared to stand down, the Phantom IIs ceased flying bombing missions over the Steel Tiger area. Aircraft of non-redeploying VMFA-115 continued BARCAP and MIGCAP flights. The withdrawal of VMCJ-1 in July ended

A Marine Grumman EA-6A Intruder is shown on the runway at the Da Nang Airbase. The EA-6A was the electronic countermeasures version of the A6A. EA-6As were used to detect and jam enemy radars in the air war over Laos and participated in Lam Son 719.

Marine Corps Historical Collection

the Marines' photographic reconnaissance and electronic warfare contributions to the interdiction campaign. A-6A Commando Bolt sorties also declined, from 212 flown in June to 60 in July and 87 in August. On 19 August, the 1st MAW temporarily halted Commando Bolt flights. This action resulted also from increased need for the all-weather bombers within South Vietnam and in part from severe maintenance problems which plagued the A-6A throughout the summer.* TA-4F Playboy missions ended on 14 September, again because of redeployment of some of the aircraft and the need for the others within South Vietnam. By October, only the F-4Bs of VMFA-115 still were flying Steel Tiger missions. They completed 33 B-52 escort missions during the month, as well as 32 BARCAP sorties.[40]

In November, the air war against the Ho Chi Minh Trail resumed with increased fury. MACV and the Seventh Air Force launched Commando Hunt V, another monsoon-season attempt to halt the flow of Communist troops and supplies into South Vietnam. General Abrams allotted 70 percent of all United States tactical sorties in Southeast Asia and the entire Arc Light effort to this campaign. At Abrams' direction, the Seventh Air Force concentrated most of this airpower on four "interdiction boxes," each a rectangle three-quarters of a mile by one and one-half miles in size covering the routes leading from one of the major passes. B-52s and tactical aircraft blasted these boxes in round-the-clock raids aimed at destroying trucks and supplies and obliterating the roads and trails. At the same time, tactical aircraft resumed antitruck patrols of the routes outside the interdiction boxes.[41]

As a result of troop redeployments and the declining level of ground action, the 1st MAW, even with its own strength much reduced, could now fly many more sorties than were needed to support Marine and allied forces in South Vietnam. The wing devoted most of the surplus to Commando Hunt V. On 8 November, the A-6As of VMA(AW)-225 resumed Commando Bolt missions, flying a steady seven sorties a day over the Laotian roads. At the same time, the F-4Bs of VMFA-115 and the A-4Es of VMA-311 went north in daylight raids on the interdiction boxes. Aircraft of these two squadrons soon were flying 14 Commando Hunt sorties a day. The F-4Bs also increased escort activities; to protect the B-52s over Laos, the Phantoms conducted 66 MIGCAP missions in November and they completed 87 BARCAP sorties. 1st MAW Commando Hunt operations continued at a level of 700-800 sorties per month through the end of 1970 and the first four months of 1971. During March and April 1971, the Marines' interdiction effort in effect became part of the close air support for Lam Son 719.*[42]

To support the renewed Laotian air offensive, EA-6As of VMCJ-1 reentered South Vietnam. In October, MACV and the Seventh Air Force asked the Marine Corps to return at least the electronic warfare elements of the squadron to help ward off SAM attacks on B-52s over Laos. Initially, the Marines were reluctant to comply; they were concerned about the political repercussions of sending even part of a withdrawn unit back to the war. Further, the Marines' worldwide level of maintenance and support personnel, parts, and equipment for the EA-6A was limited, and a recommitment of the aircraft to Southeast Asia would force curtailment of EA-6A activities elsewhere. At the urging of General McCutcheon, who stressed the indispensability of the EA-6A in Southeast Asian operations, the Marines finally agreed to deploy detachments from VMCJ-1 to Da Nang while the parent squadron stayed at Iwakuni. The aircraft at Da Nang were to be under the operational control of the Seventh Fleet, rather than III MAF.[43]

Two temporary deployments of four-plane EA-6A detachments took place during March 1971, one from the 9th through the 19th and another on the 22d. The aircraft flew 17 electronic warfare sorties during both deployments. On 5-6 April, another detachment of four EA-6As moved to Da Nang, this time "on a long-term basis." The aircraft and their crews were accompanied by 100 VMCJ-1 ground personnel and seven vans of electronic warfare support equipment. Sup-

*In June, after a Navy A-6A suffered a wing failure, the Marines began inspecting each of their Intruders for wing cracks, using both ultrasonic and x-ray equipment. The Marines' Intruders were found to be structurally sound, but, under a Navy Department program, each had to be taken out of service temporarily for modifications to strengthen the airframe. While this was being done, A-6As and EA-6As were restricted to speeds of less than 500 miles per hour and pilots were instructed to avoid violent maneuvers except on "flights of operational necessity." In addition to these limitations on operations and availability of the aircraft, the A-6A squadrons in Vietnam suffered from a shortage of key ground crewmen, and the 1st MAW Semiautomatic Checkout Equipment (SACE) complex, crucial to repair of the Intruder's complicated electronic systems, itself had to undergo extensive rehabilitation during the summer. Not until October were all the aircraft modified and the SACE complex returned to full operation. FMFPac, MarOps, Jun70, p. 46, Jul70, pp. 44-45, Aug70, p. 45, Oct70, pp. 33-34

*For details of the Marine air role in Lam Son 719, see Chapter 11.

plementing the equipment brought from Iwakuni, the detachment received assistance from MAG-11 and from VMA(AW)-225. Between 15 April and 7 May, the EA-6As completed 116 combat sorties, fragged by the Seventh Air Force and CTF 77, then returned to Iwakuni as Marine ground and air operations ceased.[44]

Between 8 November 1970 and 30 April 1971, when Commando Hunt V ended, Marine A-6As flew a total of 1,011 Commando Bolt sorties. They claimed 251 trucks destroyed and reported 771 secondary explosions and 241 secondary fires. In the same period, Marine F-4Bs and A-4Es completed 2,498 sorties, in which they claimed 36 trucks, 2 bulldozers, 4 tanks, and 14 crew-served weapons, caused 900 secondary explosions, and made 396 road cuts. Air operations over Laos continued after the end of Commando Hunt V. VMA-311, the last operational fixed-wing squadron of 3d MAB, flew missions over Laos until all Marine combat ended on 7 May.[45]

Air Support Trends in Military Region 1

I Corps/Military Region 1 consistently received more fixed-wing air support than any other allied corps area. By late 1970, the region was absorbing beween 65 and 100 percent per month of the B-52 sorties flown within South Vietnam and up to 30 percent of all tactical air sorties. Much of this airpower, substituting for withdrawing American ground forces, was used to break up enemy troop concentrations and destroy supplies in the large Communist base areas in western Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces.[46]

Until late 1970, Marine aircraft daily flew about 65 percent of the tactical air-strikes conducted in MR 1,[47] but, inexorably, as 1st MAW strength declined, so did Marine air activity. During January 1970, Marine aircraft completed 3,036 attack missions in MR 1 and 735 "combat support" sorties, a category that included reconnaissance, artillery and air-strike control, and flare drops. By June, the number of attack sorties had fallen to 2,497, although combat support missions had increased to 1,046.[48]

Reflecting the shifting balance of allied forces, Marine aircraft flew more than half of their close and direct support missions for U.S. Army, South Korean, and ARVN units. Of 29,998 A-4E, A-6A, and F-4B sorties flown in 1970, for instance, 11,348 supported Marines and 12,116 were called for by Army forces. The attack aircraft completed another 1,814 missions for the South Vietnamese and 290 for the Korean Marines. Attacks on targets outside South Vietnam accounted for the remaining sorties. By contrast, the OV-10As of VMO-2 flew all but a handful of their 7,018 sorties in support of the 1st Marine Division. The TA-4Fs split their 2,009 missions about evenly between the division and Seventh Air Force operations in Laos.[49]

Marines in turn occasionally received close support from the U.S. Air Force. An officer at the 1st MAW tactical air direction center remarked:

> Once on the target, the Air Force air is every bit as good as Marine air, not better in any way, but comparable in getting the ordnance on the target. There is a bit of a slowdown . . . as a result of the fact that Air Force air is not as familiar with the terrain features . . . in I Corps . . . but you can get them on target almost as quickly and once there they do a fine job . . . .[50]

During the last months of 1970 and early 1971, strike aircraft of all the Services operated under strict sortie limits. The Joint Chiefs of Staff on 17 August, as an economy measure, compelled by budget cuts, restricted the number of tactical air attack sorties which could be flown in southeast Asia to 14,000 per month. Of these, the JCS allotted 10,000 to the Air Force, 2,700 to the Navy, and 1,300 to the Marine Corps. Earlier, for similar reasons, the Joint Chiefs had limited B-52 sorties to 1,000 per month. MACV could exceed these ceilings only with special JCS permission.[51]

Under the JCS order, the 1st MAW could launch a maximum of 42 or 43 attack sorties per day; combat support missions did not count toward the limit. Since most of the daily attack sorties would be subject to Seventh Air Force assignment under single management, and the wing no longer could increase its sortie rate at will, the restriction initially revived III MAF fears that its ground forces would be denied adequate Marine air support, but, these concerns proved unfounded. The Seventh Air Force continued to be accommodating in mission assignments, and MACV permitted 1st MAW to reduce sorties below the maximum on some days of a month in order to exceed the maximum on other days when extra air support was required. According to Colonel Frank A. Shook, Jr., the 1st Marine Division Air Officer, "It's 1,300 sorties in any one month, but you can run 10 sorties one day and then maybe 50 the next, but you've got to bank them to do it." By this means, the wing met the 1st Marine Division requirements for support of major operations and covered the troop redeployments during August and September. In October, November, and December, as monsoon-season storms restricted both flying and ground action, the wing easily remained within the sortie limit, even with renewed

operations in Laos. In December, for example, 1st MAW aircraft flew only 539 in-country attack missions[52] which did, nevertheless, include close air support for units in the Da Nang TAOR, combat air patrols for strikes in Laos, and interdiction and armed reconnaissance missions to curtail traffic on the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

During the remaining months of combat in 1971, the 1st MAW kept its attack missions within or exactly at the 1,300 ceiling, except when the JCS temporarily removed the limit during Lam Son 719. Marine aircraft, until the final redeployments, flew 500-600 in-country strike sorties each month and the same number of combat support sorties. The rest of the available attack missions were normally used in Commando Hunt V.[53]

Controlling Air Support

Under single management, requesting and controlling fixed-wing air support was a complex but increasingly efficient process. For all missions but those employing sorties withheld for landing zone preparation and other special purposes, or the extra sorties above the one-per-day allocation to Seventh Air Force, control centered in Horn DASC.[54] This combined U.S. Air Force/U.S. Marine/Vietnamese Air Force direct air support control center had been established at Camp Horn, then III MAF Headquarters, in 1968 as the senior tactical air control agency for I Corps. Horn DASC could divert any fixed-wing mission assigned to I Corps/MR 1, and it could launch aircraft held on alert for tactical emergencies. The 1st MAW air control system, consisting of a Tactical Air Direction Center at Da Nang Airbase, a Tactical Air Operations Center on Monkey Mountain, and a Direct Air Support Control Center at 1st Marine Division Headquarters, worked in close cooperation with Horn DASC.* Until March 1970, DASC Victor at Phu Bai, subordinate to Horn DASC, controlled air support assigned to XXIV Corps units.

Marine ground units submitted requests for preplanning air support 24 hours in advance to the 1st Marine Division Air Officer. The consolidated requests from the division then went to III MAF, which combined them with air support requests from other MR 1 forces and transmitted them to the MACV Tactical Air Support Element (TASE) and the Seventh Air Force Tactical Air Operations Center (TAOC) at Saigon. After the change of command in MR 1 on 9 March 1970, XXIV Corps, now at Camp Horn, took over the transmitting function and DASC Victor was dissolved. Under MACV supervision and general direction, Seventh Air Force apportioned available sorties among the corps areas, normally assigning 1st MAW to missions in I Corps. These assignments came to the wing in the form of a daily "frag" order, to which the wing could add the special mission and surplus sorties that it still directly controlled. For 1st Marine Division support missions, the 1st MAW TADC informed the DASC of the schedule of flights ordered and the number, type, ordnance loads, radio call signs, and time of arrival on station of the aircraft assigned. The DASC had responsibility for establishing communication with the aircraft as they came into division airspace and for turning them over to ground forward air controllers (FACs) or airborne forward air controllers (FAC[A]s) who directed the actual strikes.

If fixed-wing airpower were needed to meet a sudden tactical emergency, the DASC would receive the request from the ground unit or forward air controller. On its own authority, the DASC could divert preplanned flights already assigned to the division. If no such flights were in the area, the DASC would ask the TADC for additional strikes. The TADC then could "scramble" any available Marine aircraft or pass the request on to either Horn DASC or Saigon. With the slowing tempo of ground combat during 1970-1971, the Marines found it possible to rely more on preplanned missions and less on emergency scrambles. An officer of the wing TADC reported: "We have . . . gone much more in-country to pre-fragged missions and reduced our scramble rate."[55]

While complicated, the system by 1970 usually delivered air support when and where Marine ground troops needed it. According to a FAC(A) with VMO-2, "You can expect [emergency] fixed-wing support on station within 30 minutes, in almost all cases, unless the weather or some emergency situation should arise, or the aircraft should go down [suffer mechanical

*In the Marine air control system, the TADC was the senior facility, responsible for command and control of all 1st MAW aircraft, and for use on assigned missions. The TAOC was to conduct air surveillance and direct antiair warfare operations; in Vietnam, it assisted in controlling fixed-wing aircraft. The DASC, a wing agency usually located at the headquarters of the supported unit, controlled all fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft assigned to missions in support of the 1st Marine Division.

Army divisions had the equivalent of a DASC, and the Air Force had its own air control system for its aircraft, with a Combat Reporting Center (CRC) on Monkey Mountain as senior control agency.

failure] on the ground . . . Thirty minutes is generally soon enough to do the job."[56]

All aircraft furnishing direct support to Marine ground forces had to be controlled by a ground or airborne forward air controller, or by an air support radar team. Marine battalions each had a tactical air control party to transmit air support requests and control strikes, but ground FACs had proved to be of only limited usefulness in the obstructed terrain and scattered small-unit actions characteristic of the war in Quang Nam. Airborne FACs, usually flying in OV-10As in the air over the division TAOR, conducted visual and photographic reconnaissance, or spotted for artillery when not controlling strikes. In emergencies, one of these OV-10As, diverted by the division DASC, was the first aircraft on the scene. The forward air controller, riding in the backseat of the OV-10, established contact with the ground unit, determined what type and amount of air support was required, requested it through the DASC, and then controlled the responding aircraft.[57]

To support ground forces and conduct bombing missions at night and in bad weather, the Marines developed two sophisticated and effective electronic air strike control systems. In 1968, they brought the Radar Beacon Forward Air Control (RABFAC), commonly known as the "Beacon," to Vietnam for use with the A-6A.[58] The heart of this system was a six-pound, battery-powered radar transponder, or beacon, carried by a ground forward air control party. The beacon emitted a distinctive signal which the Intruder's radar picked up as the aircraft came within range of the unit to be supported. By radio, the ground FAC informed the pilot of his location and that of the friendly troops, provided the bearing of the target in relation to the beacon, and stated the target type and desired direction of the bombing run. Once fed this data, the A-6A's attack-navigation system could guide the plane to the objective and automatically release its ordnance. Since the FAC rarely could determine the bearing between himself and the target with complete accuracy, beacon strikes usually had to be adjusted like artillery fire, with the A-6 dropping one or two bombs on each pass and the FAC sending course corrections, but normally the plane would be on target by the third run.

During 1970-1971, Marine A-6A squadrons regularly flew as many as a dozen beacon sorties per day on missions fragged directly by 1st MAW. Units of the Americal and the 101st Airborne Divisions; the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized); and the 5th Special Forces Group, as well as the 1st Marine Division, were equipped with beacons. According to Colonel Walter E. Sparling, the 1st MAW G-3, the Army units "like [the beacon] even better, they say, than an Arc Light. They know there's complete secrecy in a beacon [and] greater accuracy . . . ."[59]

In November 1970, to increase exploitation of the beacon and furnish more close air support during the monsoon season, the 1st MAW introduced "Buddy Bombing." It began sending A-4s, F-4s, or A-6s with nonfunctioning electronic systems to accompany each Intruder on a beacon flight. The "Buddy" aircraft would follow the beacon guided plane on its run, releasing its ordnance at the command of the lead pilot.

While useful, the beacon system had its limitations. Ground units in heavily populated areas rarely could employ it for lack of political clearance for strikes. Radio equipment failures often prevented the infantry from contacting the supporting aircraft, and the elaborate electronic systems of the Intruder were also difficult to keep in working order. General Armstrong summed up: "There's too damn many things to go wrong . . . in the beacon. The airplane system goes down, beacon doesn't work properly, or you don't have reliable air-ground communications. Our mission completion rate was only about 50 percent . . . in a long period of months."[60]

Much more reliable than the RABFACs were the Marine AN/TPQ-10 radar course directing centrals, operated by the air support radar teams (ASRT) of MASS-3.[61] These devices, each a combination of radars and computers, located at strategic points throughout Military Region 1, could track aircraft at ranges of up to 50 miles and direct them to targets. An ASRT normally received target assignments from the DASC it was supporting and was subordinate to the DASC. When a strike aircraft came into range, the ASRT took over as final controller of the attack. The ASRT would determine the aircraft's position in relation to that of the TPQ-10. With this information, and with the position of the target already known, the team then worked out a course and bomb release time for the aircraft and directed it to the objective by radio. Using the AN/TPQ-10, the air support radar teams could deliver ordnance accurately under the worst weather conditions, day or night.

ASRTs during 1970 controlled 5,421 Marines, Air Force, Army, and Navy missions. They also positioned aircraft for flare and supply drops, photographic reconnaissance runs, and medical evacuations. In early 1971, the Da Nang ASRT and HMM-262 successfully used

the system, combined with a beacon, to guide helicopters to preselected landing zones in the field. The application of air support radar devices to helicopter operations enhanced the wing's ability to resupply ground units and move them when rain and fog had previously made helicopter support operations prohibitive. With the ASRT, the Marine Corps made a unique contribution to the air war; no other Service had facilities comparable in both accuracy and displacement ability.

At the beginning of 1970, MASS-3 had five ASRTs deployed, at Quang Tri, FSB Birmingham near Phu Bai, Da Nang, An Hoa, and Chu Lai. As part of the Keystone Robin Alpha redeployment in mid-1970, III MAF prepared plans to withdraw most of the personnel of MASS-3 and all of its ASRTs except the one at Da Nang. This plan met strong objection from XXIV Corps, which relied heavily on the Quang Tri ASRT to support the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mech) and Birmingham ASRT to control air strikes for the 101st Airborne Division in northern MR 1. The Army so valued the AN/TPQ-10 that, according to General Armstrong, "If the Army commanders had had their way, our AN/TPQ-10 would have been out there until they left." After extensive discussions, the Marines agreed to remove MASS-3 from the Keystone Robin Alpha troop list and keep three ASRTs at Quang Tri, Birmingham, and Da Nang. These ASRTs continued in operation until the final Marine redeployment in May 1971.*[62]

*For the role of the Quang Tri ASRT in Operation Lam Son 719, see Chapter 11.

CHAPTER 16

Helicopter Operations and New Technology, 1970-1971

Improving Helicopter Support of the 1st Marine Division—Helicopter Operations
New Ordnance and Aircraft—Aviation Achievements and Costs

Improving Helicopter Support of the 1st Marine Division

During the last year and a half of combat, Generals Thrash and Armstrong devoted much time and effort to improving helicopter support of ground operations. The wing commanders acted against a background of mutual recrimination between aviation and ground Marines. This quarrel had reached a climax in 1969, when the wing, with not enough helicopters, was trying to support two reinforced Marine divisions. Ground commanders complained that Marine helicopters were unresponsive to their requirements, and many looked with increasing favor to the Army system of attaching helicopters directly to individual divisions and brigades. Lieutenant Colonel James W. Rider, who flew AH-1G Cobra gunships with VMO-2 and HML-367 in 1969-1970, was sympathetic in recalling criticism from the infantry: "The Marine command and control system required that all helicopters be requested at least one day in advance with exception of emergency missions. This did not afford Marine ground commanders the flexibility that their Army ground colleagues had."[1] Other Marine aviators declared that their ground counterparts made unrealistic demands and refused to appreciate the limitations and difficulties of rotary-wing operations. These arguments spread from Vietnam throughout the Marine Corps, raising doubts about the validity of the Marine system of helicopter command and control and, indeed, about the solidarity of the air-ground team as a whole. General Chapman, in a Green Letter to all general officers issued on 4 November 1969, acknowledged that "unfortunately, air-ground relationships are not all they could and must be."[2]

Even as Chapman wrote, efforts to remedy the situation were under way. During 1969, two separate Marine study groups investigated helicopter usage, and command and control. In Vietnam, Lieutenant General Nickerson convened a board of III MAF officers, headed by Major General Carl A. Youngdale, the MAF deputy commanding general, which thoroughly reviewed the conduct of 1st MAW helicopter operations. At Quantico, a study group at the Marine Corps Development Center, then commanded by Major General Armstrong, who shortly afterward took over the 1st MAW, examined air-ground relations in general. This group also concentrated on helicopter problems as the major area of friction.

Both investigations reached similar conclusions. The boards reaffirmed the validity of basic Marine Corps principles of air and ground organization and helicopter command and control. Both declared that most of the air-ground difficulties in Vietnam had resulted from a shortage of helicopters and from the fact that one wing had had to work with two widely separated divisions. The investigative boards, nevertheless, also uncovered remediable failings in the application of Marine Corps doctrine. They emphasized training deficiencies, which had left many air and ground commanders ignorant of the fundamentals of each other's specialties. While they rejected the Army system of permanently attaching helicopters to ground units, both study groups recommended strengthening the authority of the DASCs, located with the divisions and which controlled both helicopter and fixed-wing support, to speed the exchange of information between the divisions and the wing, and to permit more rapid reassignment of helicopters in response to tactical emergencies. To improve support of the 3d Marine Division, the Youngdale Board advocated establishment of a 1st MAW auxiliary wing headquarters, which would be commanded by a brigadier general assistant wing commander and located at 3d Division Headquarters in Quang Tri. Lieutenant General Nickerson promptly implemented this recommendation with beneficial results.[3]*

The withdrawal of the 3d Marine Division from Vietnam during the second half of 1969 reduced III MAF to a single Marine division paired with a single wing, both located in the Da Nang area. To support the 1st Marine Division, at the beginning of 1970 the 1st MAW had available 52 UH-1Es, about half of them armed, 28 AH-1Gs, 117 CH-46Ds, and 20 CH-53Ds. This represented an abundance of helicopters never

*Earlier, Provisional MAG-39 had been set up at Quang Tri in an effort to coordinate helicopter support of the 3d Marine Division.

attained or even expected by the division.* The favorable ratio of air support to ground troops continued throughout the 1970-1971 redeployments, as III MAF kept infantry and helicopter withdrawals in close balance.

Major General Thrash took full advantage of the new sufficiency of helicopters. He announced as his policy that "any [helicopter] mission requested by the division that is within our capability will be launched."[4] Following many of the recommendations of the Youngdale Board, Thrash tried to improve the coordination of helicopter and ground operations and to increase mutual understanding by air and ground Marines of each other's techniques and problems. Also, within the limits of existing aviation organization and doctrine, he began experimenting with the delegation of helicopter mission assignments, and, in some cases, command and control, to ground unit headquarters.

During 1970-1971, the 1st MAW assistant wing commander routinely attended the 1st Marine Division commanders' briefing four days a week to note and report to the wing any ground complaints about air operations and any division plans which would affect air activities. To improve day-to-day coordination of helicopter and infantry operations, the wing stationed a colonel/assistant G-3 at the DASC located with the 1st Division. This officer, in consultation with the division air officer, had the authority to divert or assign secondary missions to any helicopters flying in support of the division; if necessary he could request additional helicopters directly from the wing TADC. All 1st MAW helicopters on missions for the division on a particular day were treated as a single "division block," which the DASC could employ. In contrast to the previous practice of having only junior aviation officers regularly in the DASC, placing a colonel there expedited air-ground consultation on problems as they arose. In the words of Major General Armstrong, "You get a colonel up . . . at the division, and you can talk to people."[5]*

To enhance understanding by air and ground Marines of each other's methods and problems, wing and division units began orientation visits. Lieutenants from the division periodically spent days with the CH-46 squadrons of MAG-16. According to Colonel Haywood R. Smith, who commanded the helicopter group from March to October 1970, the infantry officers "would fly with us, see . . . their area from the air. See what we did and how we did it and why we did it. And it helped."[6] Both fixed-wing and helicopter aviators, in turn, visited infantry regiments and battalions. They toured positions, attended briefings on operations, and watched artillerymen and infantrymen employ their weapons. The jet pilots, particularly, found this experience "highly interesting to most of the officers, who had not been to Basic School and had a chance to fire . . . these . . . weapons."[7]** Many pilots also had lengthy, informal, and frank discussions with ground commanders about air support problems. Among the problems discussed was medical evacuation after dark. "Support at night was difficult to obtain, except for emergencies," recalled Lieutenant Colonel James W. Rider who flew Cobras for HML-367, "This was true even on nights with good visibility and bright illumination. I called in a priority medevac about 1800 one evening, before sunset, and was told that the night crews had assumed

*The wing is the aviation element which is task-organized to support a Marine division. It's composition is variable, however each wing must be capable of performing the six functions of Marine aviation. A typical wing might include two fixed-wing Marine Air Groups (MAGs) and one helicopter MAG. The MAGs are also task-organized. In 1970, a helicopter MAG supporting a division could have included one attack squadron (HMA) of 24 AH-1Gs, three medium helicopter squadrons (HMMs) each composed of 12 CH-46Ds, a heavy squadron (HMH) of 24 CH-53Ds, and a light squadron (HML) of 24 UH-1Es. The foregoing helicopter structure is notional; its precise composition would be determined by the actual size of the ground unit, the mission assigned, and a host of other subjective considerations associated with mission accomplishment.

*Helicopter missions were divided into preplanned and on-call categories. Ground units requested preplanned helicopter support a day in advance through the 1st Marine Division Air Officer, who, in turn, submitted requests to 1st MAW G-3. The wing then consolidated requests from the division and other XXIV Corps units and prepared a daily fragmentary order, a copy of which went to the DASC. The DASC then monitored the missions, controlling the helicopters as they entered division airspace and passing them on to the terminal controllers with the ground units. On any given day, more preplanned missions were ordered than there were helicopters to carry then out. As a helicopter finished its first assigned mission, if another mission remained uncovered and the helicopter had not exceeded its flight hours for the day, the DASC could give it a second mission. On-call missions, not listed on the frag, came from the regiments and the division air office to the DASC, which then could divert already assigned helicopters, assign the additional mission as a secondary mission, or call on the TADC to launch additional aircraft. Helicopters ftagged to the division for preplanned or on-call additional missions all became part of the "division block," when so assigned. McNamara Intvw.

**Due to a shortage of pilots, most junior Marine aviators at this time did not attend the Basic School, but instead went directly from the officer candidate programs to flight instruction.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A422840

Three Sikorsky CH-46 Sea Knights return to Marble Mountain Airbase east of Da Nang after an operation in July 1970. The Sea Knights were introduced into Vietnam in 1966 and by 1970 the versatile aircraft were the mainstay of Marine troop airlifts.

the duty at Marble Mountain and only flew emergency missions."[8]

Aviators assigned as air liaison officers (ALOs) with regiments and battalions often found themselves involved in a process of mutual education. First Lieutenant George S. Bennett of VMA-311, assigned to the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines as a FAC/ALO, discovered little need for his services as a forward air controller, but he reported: "the infantry does have a need for an ALO on many occasions, mainly because they're not trained in aviation . . . . They just didn't know certain things, and the ALO . . . became quite involved in planning for operations." Sometimes, Bennett recalled, "you would just have to corner the colonel or a major and say, 'Well, Sir, you just can't do that . . . . You just don't understand, Sir, you're not a pilot.'"[9]

Whether as a result of ALOs cornering colonels, or of orientation visits, or of more frequent experience in working together, ground units and helicopter squadrons during 1970 became increasingly adaptable in adjusting tactics for particular missions. To assist the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines in its successful August surprise raid on a Viet Cong district headquarters, MAG-16 waived its standard requirement for prior air and artillery preparation of the helicopter landing zone. Major Grinalds, the 2d Battalion S-3, declared:

> The planning started from the initial stages. As soon as the information came in . . . the ALOs got together with the MAG, and the ground scheme of maneuver came forward immediately, and the question of the prep was discussed right away . . . and the decision [was] made that we could go without the prep.[10]

One aviator years later gave a blunt rationale for eliminating the prep: "This policy was frequently waived, when it bordered on the ridiculous. In late 1969, a staff study floated around the 1st Marine Division criticizing the stereotyped, long drawn out preps. They frequently sacrificed surprise and shock."[11]

During 1970-1971, the wing made increasing use of helicopter "package," assortments of command aircraft, gunships, and transports organized for particular missions and usually placed on alert each day, ready for emergencies or tactical opportunities. A quick reaction package, for example, Mission 80, consisting of four CH-46s, a Huey, and two gunships, stood by at Marble Mountain for use by the 1st Marine Division Pacifier unit and for reconnaissance team extractions. Daily, the wing furnished two medical evacuation packages, each of two AH-1Gs or armed UH-1Es and two CH-46Ds. In April 1970, the wing instituted the Night Hawk package, later renamed Black Hammer, a Huey with special observation equipment escorted

by two gunships, for night armed reconnaissance and support of troops in contact.*

Helicopter packages, as such, were not new, but during 1970-1971 the wing departed from past practice by placing particular packages under the operational control of infantry regimental commanders. General Thrash introduced this innovation early in 1970. Carrying out a proposal of the Youngdale Board, he assigned a command and control package, usually two CH-46Ds, to each infantry regiment of the 1st Marine Division. Each day, the wing placed these helicopters at the disposal of the regimental commander, to be used as he wished for reconnaissance, resupply, and administrative movement of personnel. Thrash explained: "They can use it any way they want to, except for tactical use to put troops in the field, because then we have to tie it back to gunbirds and other things."[12]

Major General Armstrong, after replacing Thrash as 1st MAW commander, went even further in turning helicopters over to the regiments. In October 1970, Armstrong established Mission 86, a package of six CH-46Ds, four AH-1Gs, a UH-1E command and control aircraft, and sometimes a CH-53D, daily stationed at LZ Baldy to support the 5th Marines. Colonel Clark V. Judge, the 5th Marines commander, had full control of these helicopters. In consultation with a helicopter commander (airborne) (HC[A]) provided by the wing, Judge could employ the package even for heliborne combat assaults. Colonel Judge had originally proposed the creation of this package to give his regiment more flexible and responsive helicopter support. The wing, according to Armstrong:

> . . . took a look at it. My helicopter people were not for it, but I said, "Look, that's part of the system. If a quick reaction force down there will do the tactical job, then we'll try it . . . ."
>
> And we were ready to do it before the division was ready to turn responsibility for the conduct of operations over to the regimental commander, and decentralize their authority in execution and decision-making . . . . We were willing to do it, and did it. But we were ready before they sold it up the infantry side of the chain.[13]

The 5th Marines' package proved to be a complete success, and the wing later created a similar, smaller package for the 1st Marines.** General Armstrong acknowledged that: "The type of operation we had there was possible only because . . . relative to the number of ground forces that were there, we had probably the most favorable ratio of helicopters" in the whole Vietnam war. Armstrong encountered "a great reluctance on the part of some of my good aviator friends" to exploit this favorable ratio by creating regimental packages. "They had husbanded their limited resources for so long that they didn't think this would work . . . . In fact, it was very effective—and they admitted so, afterwards."[14]

By the time the last helicopter and ground units withdrew from Vietnam, the 1st MAW apparently had vindicated the Marine system for command and control of helicopters. With only one division to support, and with a sufficient number of helicopters available, the wing had been able to furnish rapid, flexible, and innovative assistance to ground operations. All the steps taken by the wing during this period, General Armstrong pointed out, including the creation of regimental-controlled packages, existed in established Marine Corps helicopter doctrine. He summed up: "We used the doctrine . . . . We knew what it was. We took advantage of it . . . ."[15]

Helicopter Operations

The declining intensity of combat brought no reduction of the demands on the MAG-16 helicopters and crews. In fact, Colonel Robert W. Teller, the 1st MAW Chief of Staff, observed: "I don't understand it, but if the helicopter availability goes up, flight hours go up, and we got just as good a war going on as we ever had."[16]

During January 1970, Marine helicopters flew 30,942 sorties. They carried 71,978 troops and passengers, hauled 5,549 tons of cargo, and completed 6,873 gunship and 3,057 command and control missions. The monthly helicopter sortie rate remained at or above 30,000 until July 1970, when it rose to 38,109. Consistently, Marine helicopters flew about 70 percent of these missions in support of the 1st Marine Division, and most of the remainder for the ARVN and the Korean Marines.

Under the standards set by the Navy Department, the 1st MAW was overusing its helicopters. The Chief of Naval Operations prescribed a maximum number of flight hours per month for each helicopter type in the Marine Corps inventory, ranging from 31.5 hours for the CH-53 to 60.6 for the UH-1E. On this standard, called the utilization factor, the Navy planned its purchase of fuel and spare parts and maintained

*For additional detail on Black Hammer actions, see Chapter 12.

**For details of regimental quick reaction force operations, see Chapter 6.

its "pipeline" of these items for the squadrons in Vietnam. By early 1970, III MAF helicopters regularly were flying at a rate of 125 to 150 percent of the CNO utilization factor. This high rate of use in turn created a shortage of spare parts, causing helicopters to be grounded for lack of parts,* and increasing the already high utilization rate of the remaining aircraft. The vicious cycle continued until, by mid-1970, utilization rates for some helicopter types had reached 170 percent of the factor. At the same time, reductions in spare part shipments and a shortage of maintenance personnel, which resulted from disrupting the replacement system due to uncertainty in Keystone Robin Alpha plans, compounded repair and supply problems. Colonel Teller bluntly summed up: "You can't keep this going forever."**[17]

In late August, accordingly, Major General Armstrong limited flight hours for all helicopter types to a maximum of 120 percent of the CNO utilization factor. With the number of helicopters then in its possession, under this restriction the wing could furnish an average of 315 helicopter flight hours per day, about 220 of which were normally available to support the 1st Marine Division. The division often used up to 150 helicopter hours in a single major troop lift, but it managed to operate within the limit by reducing command and control packages and cancelling resupply runs when necessary to support a large operation. Colonel Walter E. Sparling, the wing G-3, reported: "It took a little while for people to get used to this, but we've been able to juggle our frags and stay with it and . . . keep utilization down."[18] In spite of the limitation, in October the wing was able to establish the regimental packages for the 1st and 5th Marines.

Partly as a result of the flight hour reduction, and partly as a consequence of redeployments and monsoon weather, monthly helicopter sorties fell to a little over 30,000 in September, and during the last three months of 1970 dropped to below 25,000. Helicopters in this period flew about 7,000 hours a month. During the first part of 1971, the rate of helicopter activity declined in pace with Marine redeployment and TAOI reductions. Even with the assignment of heavy lift helicopters and gunship support for Lam Son 719 from January to March, however, the missions flown by CH-53Ds and CH-46Ds had decreased markedly.

After four years of war, the missions of each type of Marine helicopter had been established and the tactics for those missions worked out and refined. For most helicopters, missions and tactics changed little during 1970-1971. The CH-46D medium transports continued to perform the bulk of combat and noncombat trooplifts and resupply missions; and they carried out the important and hazardous medical evacuation and reconnaissance team insertion and extraction flights. CH-46s regularly flew about half of the 1st MAW helicopter sorties each month.

The AH-1G Cobra gunship played a crucial role in most helicopter combat operations, and Cobras were included in every mission package. The first of these aircraft had arrived in Vietnam in April 1969. Initially, III MAF had assigned them to the VMO-2, but in December 1969 III MAF moved the Cobras to HML-367 to assure better maintenance support and improve operating efficiency. HML-367 remained an all Cobra squadron until it redeployed in June 1971.

Helicopter gunships, both Cobras and armed Hueys, had escort of transports as their primary task. On flights likely to meet opposition in the landing zone, the pilot of the lead gunship often located and scouted the zone and directed the troop carriers into it. If enemy gunners opened fire, the Cobras, circling at altitudes of 500-800 feet, immediately closed in on the source of the fire and replied with machine guns, miniguns, grenade launchers, and rockets. The gunships could attack targets within 15 to 20 yards of friendly positions. Their fire was intended less to kill the enemy than to stop the Communists from shooting at the transports. As Colonel Smith, the MAG-16 commander, put it, "I'm not saying that . . . we're killing someone every time that we put the fire down . . . . What it does, it keeps the people's head down and they quit firing at the airplane."[19]

The AH-1Gs were plagued by repeated engine failures, which eventually were ended in late 1970 by replacement of the power plants in most Cobras with a much improved T53 engine. Retrofitting the AH-1Gs enabled the squadron to resume full operational capability. HML-367 also had difficulty obtaining satisfactory ammunition belts for its 40mm automatic grenade launchers and, according to Colonel Smith, had to "steal a lot . . . from the Army" to keep its

*Such aircraft would be designated aircraft out of commission parts (AOCP), as opposed to aircraft out of commission maintenance (AOCM), which indicated failure to complete repairs.

**As far back as April 1969, the Youngdale Board had recommended that III MAF either make "every effort" to increase the supply of spare parts or reduce the number of hours to the CNO utilization factor. Youngdale Report, pp. 16-19.

Marine Corps Historical Collection

Two Marine Sikorsky CH-53D Sea Stallions are seen lifting off after landing troops of the South Vietnamese Regional Forces in a landing zone during July 1970. These heavy helicopters could carry as many as 60 Marines, almost double the capacity of the CH-46.

weapons firing. In spite of these difficulties, the Cobra squadron kept up a gruelling flight schedule. Its monthly sortie rate rose from 4,556 in January 1970 to 5,720 in June and then gradually declined during the rest of the year, partly as a result of the reduction of III MAF forces and operations and partly as a consequence of stricter 1st MAW enforcement of the CNO helicopter flight hour limitations. By early 1971, the Cobras were flying an average of abour 1,600 hours per month in 4,400 sorties. First Lieutenant Herbert P. Silva, a gunship pilot, reported, "We've got a tremendous [aircraft] availability from our maintenance [and] we use our people as much as we can. It's not unusual for a pilot to be ready to fly, in the ready room, or out on a mission for 12 to . . . 15 hours a day."[20]

The UH-1Es of HML-167 were continually in demand for a variety of tasks. Command and control missions for III MAF units and for the 2d ROKMC Brigade daily required about half of the squadron's 12-15 available unarmed Huey "Slicks." Two were constantly in use by III MAF Headquarters, two more were regularly assigned to the 1st Marine Division, and one each to the 1st MAW, Force Logistic Command, and the Korean Marine Brigade. The rest often transported the endless stream of visitors to III MAF Headquarters, including commanders from other Services and allied nations and travelling U.S. Congressmen and government officials. These requirements decreased after III MAF ceased to be the senior American command in I Corps/MR 1, but "VIP" missions remained a drain on the wing's helicopter availability until the last Marines redeployed.*[21]

The unarmed Hueys also flew reconnaissance missions. Carrying the XM-3 Airborne Personnel Detector (APD),** they attempted to locate hidden enemy troops. Hueys fitted with xenon searchlights and night observation devices were the eyes of the effective Night Hawk/Black Hammer patrols. The squadron's gunships, reinforcing the HML-367 Cobras, escorted trans-

*Major General George S. Bowman years later noted the mobility the helicopter brought, for better or worse, in some cases, to the war. Considering the mobility afforded the "commanders, their staffs and the visitors, including the press," he said, "even the squad leader was not exempt from a surprise visit from the top brass in Washington down to his own unit commander, and sometimes they had a politician in tow . . . . I'm still impressed by the mobility the helicopter gave to this conflict." MajGen George S. Bowman, Comments on draft MS, 27Jun83 (Vietnam Comment File).

**The APD, or "People-sniffer," located the enemy by sensing the chemicals in the air given off by human activity, including sweat, campfire smoke, and engine exhaust. FMFPac, MarOps, Dec70, pp. 49-50.

port helicopters, supported troops in contact, and participated in the APD and Black Hammer flights.

In January 1970, Hueys of HML-167 flew over 2,460 hours; the gunships accounted for about 1,450 of these and the "Slicks" for 1,010. By June, activity had increased to 2,480 flight hours, about evenly divided between gunship, transport, and command and control missions, in 7,028 sorties. The squadron in this month of peak activity carried 3,846 passengers, and its gunships fired 191,500 rounds of machine gun ammunition and 2,020 2.75-inch rockets. During the remainder of 1970 and early 1971, demands on the Hueys gradually declined with the reduction in Marine strength and activity, but HML-167 continued flying reconnaissance and transport missions until the last units of the 3d MAB redeployed. Even after the squadron stood down on 26 May, two of its Hueys remained in operation until 15 June to support 3d MAB Headquarters, allowing HML-167 to claim the title of "the last operating Marine helicopter squadron in Vietnam."[22]

Unlike the other Marine helicopters, the CH-53 enlarged its combat role and took on major new missions during 1970-1971. The first of these heavy helicopters had arrived in Vietnam in January 1967. Two squadrons of them, HMHs -361 and 463, were in the country at the end of 1969. Much to the frustration of their crews, the Sea Stallions had largely been restricted to noncombat troop transport and supply missions and to recovering downed aircraft. Marine commanders hesitated to risk such an expensive helicopter under hostile fire.* Furthermore, a shortage of spare parts and inexperience in maintaining the CH-53 had reduced the number of aircraft available for service at any one time to no more than 25 percent of the nominal strength of the squadron.

Withdrawal of HMH-361 early in 1970, roughly halving the total number of CH-53s in Vietnam, alleviated the shortage of parts and qualified ground crewmen. As a result, HMH-463 was continually able to keep 14 to 16 of its 20 aircraft in flying condition. By March 1970, all of the "A" model CH-53s had been removed from Vietnam, and HMH-463 had a full complement of improved CH-53Ds. According to Colonel Sparling, the CH-53D was "the first airplane I know of that we've got that is over-powered, that has more power than is really required." HMH-463 at the same time removed a major inhibition on exposing the CH-53 to enemy fire by developing a method for recovering downed CH-53s from the field.* In the light of these changes, Lieutenant Colonel Charles A. Block, the HMH-463 commander, began pressing the wing to give his aircraft a more active role in the war.[23]

During March, the 1st MAW began using CH-53Ds, as well as CH-46s, to carry Marines and also Vietnamese and Korean troops in heliborne assaults. The ability of the Sea Stallion to move as many as 60 Marines in one aircraft and the large helicopter's speed, which reduced the duration of exposure to hostile fire when approaching a defended landing zone, quickly won the favor of troop commanders. With its great power, the CH-53D could lift men and equipment into high-altitude landing zones which CH-46s could not reach. By mid-August, CH-53Ds were participating in three or four assault missions a week, as well as continuing their logistic and aircraft recovery activities.[24]

Despite the "rapid troop buildup" capacity of the aircraft, commanders continued to worry about the high casualties that would occur if a fully loaded CH-53D were shot down or crashed during an assault. The decision whether to put many men in a single large helicopter or to use more smaller helicopters involved a complex balance of risks. Major General Armstrong later summed up the problem:

> If you have . . . a defended zone, are you better off to put twice as many people in a single helicopter and take advantage of either surprise or your suppressive capabilities, getting in quickly, unload it and get it out? Or should you put half as many people in the first one; and because of the lack of the element of surprise—and that pertains to not only the fact that you're making the operation but the direction of approach and everything which is given away by the first troop-lift helicopter—and do you thereby so affect the vulnerability factors that you greatly decrease the survival [chances] of the second helicopter? . . . This is a very controversial thing, and one [that] would really have to be calculated very carefully.[25]

Eventually, late in 1970, Armstrong, Lieutenant

*In December 1966, Lieutenant General Victor A. Krulak, then CGFMFPac, had defined the role of the CH-53 as "primarily for transport of supplies and equipment . . . . They are not regarded as primarily an assault, reconnaissance, evacuation, or observation aircraft . . . ." CGFMFPac msg to CMC, dtd 3Dec66, quoted in LtCol William R. Fails, USMC, *Marines and Helicopters, 1962-1973* (Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, HQMC, 1978), p. 116.

*Under the squadron plan, the rotor heads, and transmission would be removed from the downed aircraft. Then three Sea Stallions would lift out the hulk and the other components as separate loads. Hayes intvw.

General McCutcheon, and Major General Widdecke together agreed that no more than 33 Marines were to be carried in any one helicopter in normal operations, although up to 45 South Koreans or South Vietnamese and "just any numbers of irregular, CIDGs," could be lifted. Nevertheless, Armstrong recalled, "We did leave the door open for discussion and running operations on a basis of their own, but the planning figure thereafter was 33."[26]

During May and June 1970, the wing began using CH-53s to conduct large-scale napalm attacks on enemy troops and base areas.[27] The concept for these operations originated with the 2d ROKMC Brigade. The South Korean Marines had discovered that the 55-gallon fuel drums filled with napalm, when dropped from an Army CH-47 Chinook, would smash their way to the ground through the thickest jungle and burst upon impact, spattering their inflammable contents in all directions. Ignited by strafing, napalm so delivered would spread fire over the ground more effectively than would napalm bombs from fixed-wing aircraft and served admirably to clear an area of boobytraps. At the request of the South Koreans, late in May, XXIV Corps ordered 1st MAW to prepare to carry out such operations. The Marines quickly realized that this technique would allow effective air attacks on enemy positions, for instance under thick jungle canopy, which could not be seriously damaged by conventional bombing. On 31 May and 3 June, CH-53Ds of HMH-463 made two small napalm drops southwest of Da Nang to support the Korean Marines. Under the codename Operation Thrashlight, the wing staff began planning larger drops, using napalm-carrying CH-53s in combination with bombing and strafing by jets and helicopter gunships.

On 7 June, the wing launched its first full-scale Thrashlight. The target, an area of deep ravines and canyons roofed with triple-canopy jungle about 35 miles southwest of Da Nang, was believed to contain the hideout of *Front 4 Headquarters*. Starting at 0600 on the 7th, CH-53Ds struck the target in 12-plane flights, each flight composed of waves of three helicopters. Each Sea Stallion carried 8,000 pounds of napalm in 20 55-gallon drums slung in cargo nets, the rigging of which was provided by Marines of Company C, 1st Shore Party Battalion. The pilots released the drums at an altitude of 1,500 to 2,000 feet. OV-10As and AH-1Gs, escorting the CH-53s, set fire to the napalm with tracers and rockets. Between helicopter flights, F-4Bs and A-6As pounded the target with heavy delayed-action bombs. During the day, the CH-53s flew 99 attack sorties, the F-4Bs completed 20 sorties, and the A-6As, 14. The results were anticlimatic. Aerial photographs taken after the raid showed caved-in bunkers and denuded trails in the burned-over area, but the fate of *Front 4 Headquarters* if it had been there at all, could not be determined.

Thrashlight, nevertheless, possessed promise as a means of spreading fire and destruction over a wide area. As an HMH-463 pilot put it, "Besides having a tremendous psychological impact on the enemy, it burns the heck out of him."[28] The Marines now had their own small-scale version of the carpet bombing carried on by Air Force B-52s. Indeed, Marine pilots, according to General McCutcheon, began calling the CH-53 the "B-53."[29]

Marines conducted two more large Thrashlight operations, as well as a number of smaller napalm drops, during 1970. One of the major attacks took place on 14 June, in support of a 51st ARVN Regiment drive against enemy-held ridges overlooking Thuong Duc. The second, on 4 September, prepared the ground for a two-company sweep by the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines in the Arizona Territory. Logistic limitations, including difficulty in obtaining enough 55-gallon drums, and the impossibility of using the technique near populated areas, prevented more frequent Thrashlights.

At the same time as the wing was developing Thrashlight, HMH-463 was preparing for still another new mission. In May 1970, Marine CH-53Ds began carrying MACV Studies and Observation Group (SOG) teams of United States Army Special Forces soldiers and South Vietnamese mercenaries on intelligence-gathering and sabotage raids against the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos. These teams, which often went into landing zones as high as 7,000 feet above sea level, had special need for a helicopter with the speed and power of the CH-53D. The Marines installed reconnaissance team insertion and retrieval equipment on their Sea Stallions for this mission and fitted some of their aircraft with an armament package which the Air Force had developed for its "Jolly Green Giant" search-and-rescue version of the CH-53.[30]

Each month, from May through November, Marine helicopters took part in SOG lifts, described in HMH-463 reports as "a tri-Service mission in a denied access area." These activities reached their climax in Operation Tailwind. During this operation, between

7 and 14 September, HMH-463 daily committed five or six CH-53Ds, eventually supported by four Marine AH-1Gs, five Army AH1Gs or UH-1Es, two Marine and one Air Force OV-10As, and numerous flights of jets. In the face of heavy antiaircraft fire, the Marine-led flights inserted a company-size SOG force near a North Vietnamese regiment and then, after the SOG troops had accomplished their mission, extracted them. The operation cost HMH-463 two CH-53s shot down and six crewmen wounded, all of whom were rescued.[31]

Although Operation Tailwind resulted in an estimated 430 NVA casualties and in the capture of documents of great intelligence value, it evoked sharp protests to MACV from Generals McCutcheon and Armstrong. The Marine commanders complained that SOG operations were diverting too many of III MAF's dwindling number of helicopters from operations in Quang Nam and that the helicopters assigned to support the SOG spent most of their time sitting on the ground on alert. Further, especially in the case of Tailwind, the Marines criticized SOG planners for underestimating the amount of enemy opposition and initially failing to provide adequate fixed-wing and gunship protection for the transports. Armstrong recalled that he and Colonel Smith, the MAG-16 commander:

> . . . virtually put ourselves on the line and provided our own Huey Cobras for escort, etc., and we ran a fixed-wing flight down in one case. It was called for by a Cobra with no authorization . . . and [we] could have gotten into an awful lot of trouble sending airplanes into Laos to support our own helicopters without proper clearance . . . . We did it because the situation was hot and we weren't about to let our own people go unsupported . . . . These things were made necessary because the people who were involved didn't know what they were doing and what the fire support requirements really were.[32]

Marine helicopter participation in SOG operations dropped off sharply after Tailwind. CH-53Ds made a few more "tri-Service mission" flights in October and November, but then out-of-country helicopter operations ended until the Sea Stallions and Cobras went back to Laos in late January 1971 for Operation Lam Son 719.

The newly designed prototype of the Bell AH-1J Sea Cobra is shown here. The AH-1J Sea Cobras had twice the fire power of the AH-1G Huey Cobras which they replaced. A small detachment of AH-1J aircraft and pilots arrived in Vietnam in February 1971.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A419809

New Ordnance and Aircraft

During late 1970 and early 1971, the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing tested two new types of ordnance and two new aircraft. While most of this equipment represented improvement or refinements of aircraft and weapons already familiar to Marines, at least one item foreshadowed a new era in nonnuclear warfare.

On 18 November 1970, the wing received 80 CBU-55 Low-Speed Fuel-Air Explosive Munitions for tactical use and evaluation. Designed to be carried by OV-10s and helicopters, each CBU-55 weighed about 500 pounds and consisted of a canister containing three smaller bombs. When released from an aircraft, the canister opened and the three bomblets drifted to earth by parachute. Each bomblet was filled with a flammable gas. On impact, the bomb released the gas creating and then detonating an explosive mixture. The resulting blast had a force comparable to that of a conventional 2,000-pound bomb. The Marines intended to use this weapon, which could be dropped when weather prevented jet operations, for clearing landing zones and boobytrapped areas.

During November and December, OV-10As employed 68 CBU-55s in tactical operations, and UH-1Es dropped eight more. The Marines found that, as expected, a single CBU-55 could clear a landing zone in elephant grass in thick brush large enough for a CH-53D, although it could "not consistently remove trees."[33] They also discovered that the CBU-55 could crush bunkers, cave in tunnels, and clear away foliage.

In December 1970, the wing began testing a laser target spotting and bomb guidance system. This system was composed of two devices, the Laser Target Designation System (LTDS) and the Laser Guided Bomb (LGB), popularly known as the "Smart Bomb." The LTDS, a portable battery-powered laser beam generator, could be carried by a ground forward air control party or installed in an aircraft. Its narrow, invisible beam, when aimed at a target, created a reflection which an airplane equipped with a suitable detection device could sense and use as an aiming point. The LGB, a 500-pound or 2,000-pound bomb, had a detector which could guide its fall toward a laser-illuminated target, provided the pilot released his ordnance within a certain range and direction. The bomb, in effect, could aim itself.

On 12 December, four A-4Es of VMA-311, fitted with laser beam derectors, began flying LTDS-guided combat missions first with conventional ordnance and later with 500-pound "Smart Bombs." The system quickly proved effective. In good weather, a ground FAC could illuminate targets as far as 4,000 yards from his position, and the Skyhawks could pick up the reflections at distances as great as 10 miles. During January, Marine Skyhawks and A-6As carrying LGBs began flying Steel Tiger missions, in cooperation with LTDS-equipped F-4Bs of the Air Force's 244th Tactical Fighter Squadron. The Air Force jet, controlling the strike, would light up the target with its laser beam, which the Marine aircraft would use to guide their "Smart Bombs." With this system, the jets could release bombs accurately at altitudes of up to 12,000 feet, out of range of most enemy antiaircraft and automatic weapons fire. The 1st MAW also tried to combine the LTDS and LGBs with the beacon, but this experiment proved unsuccessful. In weather poor enough to require use of the beacon, the ground FAC usually could not locate the target well enough to illuminate it with his laser. Nevertheless, when the tests of laser-guided ordnance ended on 31 January, the 1st MAW recommended that the LTDS be made an "integral part" of the A-4 weapons system and that laser guided bombs "be incorporated into the Marine Corps' inventory of weapons."[34] Used on only a limited scale in this period of the war, "smart" ordnance and its associated target-seeking systems would lend precision and weight to the renewed bombing of North Vietnam in 1972-1973 and held out both the promise and the threat of an era of unprecedented accuracy in both air and ground firepower.

Of the two new aircraft tested, one was an improved version of the Cobra AH-1G helicopter gunship. The AH-1G, originally designed for the Army, had electronic systems not compatible with those of the Navy and lacked features, such as rotor brakes, required for shipboard operation. By early 1971, accordingly, the Navy Department and the Bell Helicopter Company had developed the AH-1J Sea Cobra, designed specifically for the Marines' amphibious mission. The AH-1J had improved armament, including a 20mm automatic three-barrelled cannon in a revolving chin turret. Twin jet engines gave it greater power and reliability, important in overwater flight, and it had rotor brakes and a Navy avionics system.

On 16 and 17 February 1971, a detachment of eight Marine officers and 23 enlisted men, commanded by Colonel Paul W. Niesen, arrived at Da Nang with four AH-1Js. Colonel Niesen, who had received the 1969 Alfred A. Cunningham Trophy for his work as commander of a transport helicopter squadron in Vietnam,

and his team were to test their Sea Cobras in combat attached to HML-367. The detachment spent the rest of February preparing the Sea Cobras, which had been brought from the United States in a C-130, for action while training the HML-367 pilots in their operation. On 2 March, the Cobras began flying combat missions. From then until the detachment redeployed to Okinawa in May, the AH-1Js, flown by members of HML-367 as well as Niesen's detachment, participated in every type of gunship operation. The aircraft especially distinguished itself in Lam Son 719 and in repelling the enemy night attack on the South Vietnamese garrison of Duc Duc. Beginning with its first combat missions in 1971, the AH-1J Sea Cobra demonstrated a vastly improved performance over its predecessor, afforded by twin engine reliability, the increased firepower of the 20mm cannon, and a greater diversity of weapon systems, including the ability to carry CBU-55s.*[35]

On 26 May 1971, as 3d MAB was standing down, two YOV-10Ds arrived at Da Nang for combat evaluation. These aircraft, an improved version of the Bronco, were equipped with a Night Observation Gunship System (NOGS) and a 20mm turret cannon coupled to an infrared target locating device. The system was supposed to be able to detect enemy troops on the ground at night, even in light jungle foliage. Since all 1st MAW units had ended combat operations, the wing arranged for a detachment of 21 Marine pilots and ground crewmen to operate the YOV-10Ds, as part of the Navy's Light Attack Squadron (VAL) 4, in southern South Vietnam.** On missions in MRs 3 and 4, the modified OV-10s performed satisfactorily. They were credited with killing 43 enemy in their first week of operation, causing three secondary explosions, and destroying a storage area, four sampans, and three bunkers. The detachment flew with the Navy squadron until late August, when it returned to the United States to continue tests of the NOGS.

*For details of these actions, see Chapter 11 and Chapter 12.

**In early 1970, the Marine Corps and Navy had considered deployment of ordinary Marine OV-10As to support VAL-4, but the Marine Corps had opposed any diversion of its limited Bronco strength. Admin FMFPac msg to CGFMFPac, dtd 23Apr70, FMFPac Message Files.

Aviation Achievements and Costs

In its final year and a half of combat, the efforts of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing diminished in quantity as units redeployed, but not in diversity. The wing furnished the full range of fixed-wing and helicopter support to the 1st Marine Division and to other United States, South Vietnamese, and Korean forces in Military Region 1, and it contributed significantly to the interdiction campaign in Laos. Marine aviators continually improved and refined the tactics and techniques for carrying out their many missions.

These efforts and achievements had their price in men and equipment. Between January 1970 and 14 April 1971, the wing lost 40 Marines killed in action or dead of wounds, 193 wounded, and 9 missing in action. In the same period, 17 Marine fixed-wing aircraft and 31 helicopters were destroyed in combat.*[36]

Shortly before Marine aviators left Vietnam, for what most believed was the last time,** one of them, Lieutenant General McCutcheon, summed up the record:

> Marine Corps aviation . . . performed its mission for nearly six years and carried out every function in the tactical air book. The innovations and developments it had worked on over the years were proven in combat. The new environment created new challenges for men in Marine aviation, and these were met head-on and solved. The war was the longest, and in many ways the most difficult one in which Marines have had to participate. The restraints and constraints placed upon the use of air power, and the demanding management reports of all aspects of aviation required by higher authority, imposed additional requirements on staffs with no increase in resources, in most cases, to perform the tasks. In spite of these difficulties, . . . no one outflew the United States Marines.[37]

*These losses should be placed in context. During 1970, the U.S. Air Force reported 173 aircraft lost in combat; another 81 were destroyed in 1971. The U.S. Army lost 347 helicopters in 1971. MACV ComdHist, 71, I, ch. 6, p. 20.

**Marine aviation would return to Vietnam in 1972 to help contain the Communist "Easter Offensive."

CHAPTER 17

Artillery and Reconnaissance

Artillery Operations, 1970-1971—Reconnaissance Operations, 1970-1971

Artillery Operations, 1970-1971

At the beginning of 1970, all Marine artillery units in Vietnam, with the exception of one 175mm gun battery, were under the control of the 11th Marines, the artillery regiment of the 1st Marine Division. The regiment, commanded by Colonel Don D. Ezell, consisted of its four organic battalions and the attached 1st Battalion, 13th Marines; 1st and 3d 8-inch Howitzer Batteries (SP); 1st and 3d 175mm Gun Batteries (SP); Battery K, 4th Battalion, 13th Marines; and Battery G (-), 29th Artillery, USA.

Each of the four 105mm howitzer battalions was in direct support of a Marine infantry regiment. The 1st Battalion, 13th Marines, with its CP at the Northern Artillery Cantonment (NAC) and batteries at NAC, Hill 10, and FSB Los Banos north of the Hai Van Pass, fired missions for the 26th Marines. This battalion had operational control of the Mortar Battery, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, positioned at Hill 270 and Hai Van Pass. The rest of the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines supported the 1st Marines, with its CP and one 105mm battery on Hill 55 and the other two batteries deployed at small firebases in the flatlands south of Da Nang. From positions at An Hoa and Hill 65, the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines supported the 5th Marines, while the 3d Battalion, deployed at Combat Base Baldy and FSBs Ross and Ryder, provided fire for the 7th Marines. The 4th Battalion, with its CP on Hill 34 and batteries at NAC, Hill 55, An Hoa, and FSB Ross, was in general support of the 1st Marine Division, reinforcing the 105mm batteries as required. This battalion also had operational and administrative control of Battery K, 4th Battalion, 13th Marines, stationed at FSB Ross.[1]

Of the Force Artillery units temporarily under the 11th Marines, the 1st 175mm Gun Battery (SP) was split between NAC and Hill 34, and the 3d 175mm Gun Battery (SP) was posted at An Hoa. The 1st 8-inch Howitzer Battery (SP) had platoons at Baldy, An Hoa, and Ross; the 3d was similarly divided, with platoons at NAC, Hill 65, and Hill 55. All of these units provided long-range, heavy artillery support throughout the division TAOR.[2]

The single Marine artillery unit not under 11th Marines control, the 5th 175mm Gun Battery (SP) (Rein), operated in northern I Corps. Its command post was at Dong Ha Combat Base, while its 175mm guns were at Camp Carroll and a reinforcing platoon of 8-inch self-propelled howitzers was located at FSB A-2. This battery, under the operational control of the 108th Artillery Group, USA, fired long-range missions in support of the 101st Airborne Division; the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized); and the 1st ARVN Division. It also attacked targets in enemy base areas along the Laotian border. The battery's tracked 175s periodically moved west along Route 9 to participate in Army artillery raids on enemy bases not in range from American positions.*[3]

These Marine artillery units possessed a total of 156 guns, howitzers, and mortars. Three firing batteries in each direct support battalion were armed with the tried and proven M101A1 105mm towed howitzer, which had a maximum range of 11,300 meters and could be air-transported by a CH-46; the fourth firing battery had six 4.2-inch mortars with a maximum range of 5,600 meters. The 4th Battalion, 11th Marines was equipped with M109A self-propelled 155mm howitzers, capable of hitting targets at ranges up to 14,600 meters. Eight towed 155mm howitzers also remained in the 11th Marines' inventory. These had been replaced in the general support battalion by the self-propelled version but were retained in Vietnam as a helicopter-transportable heavy weapon for reinforcement of 105s at temporary firebases.[4] Each of the regiment's direct support battalions had been issued a few of these howitzers. The battalions normally attached them to individual 105mm batteries or to their mortar batteries. The 8-inch howitzer and 175mm gun batteries, respectively, were equipped with the M110

*Activated in August 1966 as a 155mm gun battery, this unit had been in Vietnam since July 1967, initially near Chu Lai and Da Nang and in Northern ICTZ since the beginning of 1968. In March 1969, it had received its 175mm guns, and in October of the same year, as the 3d Marine Division redeployed, it came under operational control of XXIV Corps, attached to the 108th Artillery Group. 5th 175mm Gun Battery, Battery Order 5060.1, dtd 27Feb70, in 5th 175mm Gun Battery (SP) ComdC, Feb70.

8-inch howitzer, maximum range 16,800 meters, and the M107 175mm gun, maximum range 32,000 meters. Each of these self-propelled weapons had the same type of tracked, motorized carriage, which simplified maintenance and supply for the Force Artillery batteries.[5]

In early 1970, Keystone Bluejay brought artillery redeployments and relocations. The 1st Battalion, 13th Marines left Vietnam during March 1970, following its supported infantry regiment, the 26th Marines. Battery K, 4th Battalion, 13th Marines and the 5th 175mm Gun Battery also departed. To fill in for the redeploying 13th Marines battalion, the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines moved its command post to the Northern Artillery Cantonment, reassumed control of its own Mortar Battery, and moved 105mm batteries to NAC and Hill 10. Battery F, 2d Battalion, 11th Marines displaced from An Hoa to Hill 55 to reinforce the 1st Battalion.

The basic 1st Marine Division operation order assigned the 11th Marines the mission of providing "defensive and offensive fires in support of operations within and beyond the TAOR, AO, and Reconnaissance Zone" for Marines, other American Services, the South Vietnamese, and the South Koreans.[6] In performance of this task, the regiment's batteries responded to calls for fire from units in contact. They attacked actual or suspected enemy rocket and mortar positions. The Marine batteries expended much ammunition on "preemptive" and "intelligence" missions, formerly called "Harassing and Interdiction" and "Unobserved" fires.* These were bombardments of known or suspected Communist base camps, infiltration trails, assembly points, and supply caches. Many of these missions were carried out according to special fire plans to thwart periodic North Vietnamese and Viet Cong offensive "high points." As the tempo of ground combat declined, missions fired in support of engaged troops diminished to a small proportion of the total amount of artillery fire. By August 1970, only about one percent of the 11th Marines' fire missions were contact missions.[7]

In spite of the decline in contact missions, the 11th Marines continued to conduct a large volume of observed fire, mostly directed by the regiment's own observation posts as part of a program to use artillery to supplement, and in some cases replace infantry patrols blocking enemy infiltration of the populated areas of Quang Nam. Colonel Ezell, who had instituted this effort after taking command of the 11th Marines late in 1969, declared:

> It appeared to me that when we first went in, the infrastructure and the organized units were lying together in the coastal plains, and that the Marines, through offensive operations, had disengaged the organized units from the infrastructure, knocking them back to the west and to the hills . . . . Now the infrastructure had to remain . . . to control the population. But they also had a great deal of dealing with the organized units . . . . It would appear if there was a disengagement that there must be . . . a lot of travel back and forth across the battlefield by both the infrastructure and the organized units to perform their missions. My artillery was not in position to control this. My F[orward] O[bserver]s were with the rifle companies, and they were certainly forward but they weren't observers in six feet of elephant grass.**[8]

In an effort "to destroy the enemy as far away as possible, to diminish his capabilities across the battlefield to perform his mission," Ezell stated, "took 100 people out of my hide and we started a regimental OP system." These hilltop observation posts (OPs), each manned by a team of artillerymen and protected by reconnaissance or infantry elements, afforded a commanding view of the principal infiltration routes between the mountains and the populated area around Da Nang. An OP at FSB Rydet covered Antenna Valley and portions of the Que Son Valley. OPs on Hill 425 in the northern Que Sons and on Hill 119 overlooked Go Noi Island and the An Hoa basin, while others on Hills 200 and 250 in the northwestern Arizona Territory and on Hill 55 dominared the Thuong Duc corridor. Farther north, Hills 190 and 270, respectively, commanded Elephant Valley and the routes leading down from Charlie Ridge. Artillery observers in these positions seatched the countryside for enemy movement and called fire missions on promising targets, passing their requests through the apptoptiate fire support coordination centers (FSCCs).[9]

Six of these observation posts** were equipped with the Integrated Observation Device (IOD). Introduced in late 1969, this Marine Corps-developed 400-pound instrument consisted of high-powered ships' binocu-

*The regiment ordered this change in terminology on 9 March 1970. 3/11 Jnl, dtd 9Mar70, in 3/11 ComdC, Mar70.

*Colonel Ezell was relieved on 29 March 1970 by Colonel Ernest R. Reid, Jr. Reid in turn was replaced on 31 August 1970 by Colonel Edwin M. Rudzis. All three commanders followed the same artillery employment strategy.

**In April 1970, the six IOD positions were: Hill 270, Hill 200, Hill 65, Hill 119, Hill 425, and FSB Ryder. FMFPac, MarOps, Apr70, p. 4.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A374027

Two Marine enlisted men from Battery K, 3d Battalion, 11th Marines clean their 105mm howitzer. The battery position is located on Combat Base Baldy in March 1970. The sign above the ammunition bunker door reads "No Smoking Within 50 Yards."

lars combined with a night observation device and a laser rangefinder.* Using the IOD, a trained operator could sight a target at maximum range, of about 30,000 meters in daylight and, employing a supplementary xenon searchlight, 4,000 meters at night. He could identify the target and accurately establish its distance and direction from the OP. Combining the ability to provide exceptional range and an azimuth accuracy with a digital computer to prepare firing data, the batteries could "fire for effect" on the first volley, thereby eliminating the usual registration rounds which warned the enemy to take cover, while producing a 70 percent probability of first round hits. Colonel Ezell called the IOD the "missing ingredient as far as good fire support was concerned . . . . We were losing targets because during the adjustment phase while we were trying to bracket them they were jumping in holes." The IOD, he continued, "with its ability to give us the first round hit . . . was just what we needed."[10]

To operate the IODs, the 11th Marines selected its best forward observers, gave them special training with the S-2 section in use and maintenance of the instrument, and kept them at the same OPs for periods of up to five months. Constantly scanning the same countryside, observers learned every twist and turn of the enemy trail networks and spotted every tree line and bunker where the enemy customarily ran for cover from artillery fire. The more proficient observers could call in fire so as to "lead" a moving enemy column. Even when the regiment displaced an IOD to a new position, it usually left the observer team behind, to continue watching the same terrain by other means.[11]

The IOD observation posts were credited with causing impressive North Vietnamese and Viet Cong casualties. On 2 January 1970, the IOD on Ryder spotted 25 NVA in Antenna Valley; answering the call for fire, Battery I, 3d Battalion, 11th Marines killed an estimated 20. Eight days later, Battery G of the same battalion claimed 11 enemy killed of 50 sighted by the Hill 425 IOD. On 31 January, the Ryder IOD called for fire on 40 more NVA, and Batttery I responded, claiming 21 killed. During 1970, IOD-directed fire ac-

*The IOD was a product of the Marine Corps Special Procedure for Expediting Equipment Development (SPEED) project, administered by HQMC and the Marine Corps Development and Education Center. The purpose of speed was to respond more quickly than could regular research and development procedures to special requests for new equipment for Vietnam. Production and initial delivery of the IOD, a combination of three existing devices, took about six months. Of the first 10 made, four went to the Army in Vietnam and six to the 11th Marines. For additional details on SPEED, see FMFPac, MarOps, Jan-Feb71, pp. 37-39.

counted for at least 40 percent of the enemy killed by artillery in the 1st Marine Division TAOR. In a typical week 25-31 January 1970 for example, the IODs, positioned on Hills 65, 250, 119, and on FSB Ryder, fired 92 missions, claiming 91 kills.[12]

The IODs had other uses. During March 1970, the division employed their spotting reports in planning helicopterborne Kingfisher missions. Infantry units maneuvering in areas being observed by the IODs occasionally asked the observers to give them an accurate ground fix. Colonel Ezell reported: "Sometimes they ask if we will locate them. At night they can shoot a flare or fire some tracers, or in the day use a smoke grenade, which you lase on . . . and tell them exactly where they are."[13] Colonel Edwin M. Rudzis, who asumed command of the 11th Marines in the end of August, later observed that the IOD had other valuable uses: "For the artillery, it provided high burst registrations, center of impact registrations, and target area surveys." The IOD was also used to conduct six naval gunfire calibration firings and to calibrate TPQ-10 air drops of aviation ordnance. Friendly surveillance on request was another capability.[14]

An incident in early 1970, further demonstrated the influence of the IOD. On 29 January, the Ryder IOD team sighted what appeared to be an American prisoner guarded by four VC/NVA entering a hut below them in the valley. Lieutenant Colonel Charles R. Dunbaugh, a CH-46 pilot, recalled that CH-46s, Cobras, and fixed-wing aircraft had been diverted from various missions, and he then assumed "the role of helicopter commander airborne and quickly briefed the [newly] constituted flight . . . ." With an aerial observer controlling, a "Battery One" was fired to prep the zone just before landing. Fixed-wing aircraft arrived on station but couldn't support the mission because of a low cloud ceiling. Following a brief firefight in which five VC/NVA were killed and five Marines were wounded, the Marines swept the area, finding no evidence of whether or not the enemy had an American prisoner.[15]

Some Marine commanders voiced skepticism at the large casualty totals regularly claimed for IOD missions. Colonel Edward A. Wilcox, commander of the 1st Marines during the early part of 1970, commented: "I was personally of the opinion that there was an overclaim on these things. As an infantry commander, we didn't report kills unless we had them . . . on the ground and could see them; but the IOD was claiming kills from vast ranges."[16] Colonel Ezell, on the other hand, insisted that, if anything, the number of enemy dead from IOD missions was being understated. "Sometimes," he declared, "we fired on as many as 100 [troops] and we hit right on top of them maybe with 750 rounds, enough to wipe them out, and we couldn't see but two or three enemy dead." Ezell also observed:

> When you see 25 or 30 people on that battlefield, it may be 125 or 130. This has been experienced several times when we had the opportunity to find out, by our own troops. One night, we had a rifle company, . . . 129 men, and we picked them up with the IOD, and we called in to check on them, and it happened to be a friendly unit, but we had estimated them at 30 people in the elephant grass.[17]

Whatever the actual casualties inflicted, enemy reaction appeared to confirm that the accurate, sudden artillery bombardments were disrupting Communist operations. The NVA and VC launched numerous harassing attacks against IOD sites. In the most serious of these, on 9 August, an estimated 25 enemy troops, supported by mortar and RPG fire, rushed the wire surrounding the Hill 119 OP. The 20-man security unit from the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion repulsed the assault, killing eight enemy while suffering no Marine losses. Other OPs underwent occasional attacks with grenades, RPGs, or small arms, none of which inflicted significant casualties or damage.[18]

The enemy reacted by reducing daytime movement, traveling in smaller groups, and changing infiltration routes to bypass the IOD sites.* In May 1970, the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines reported: "The enemy appears to be using the traditional resupply trails in Antenna and Phu Loc Valleys less and less. However, sightings by the other OPs . . . and by units in the field showed greatly increased movement to the south and east of the Que Sons . . . possibly to avoid the IOD."[19] The 11th Marines countered this enemy tactic by periodically moving its IODs to new positions. In October, the Ryder IOD shifted to FSB Roundup, overlooking the southern Que Son Valley. This displacement resulted in an increased number of sighrings and fire missions. Similarly, in November, the Marines redeployed the IOD on Hill 270 to Dong Den, a peak in the mountains above Elephant Valley often used by recon-

*Lieutenant Colonel Pieter L. Hogaboom, operations officer of the 26th Marines, years later said the regiment "was mildly surprised that most of the kills we got from surprise fire called by the IOD teams were gotten during broad daylight, and not as we anticipated at night or in reduced visibility." LtCol Pieter L. Hogaboom, Comments on draft ms, 10Jun83 (Vietnam Comment File).

naissance teams, but the move produced only meager results. Partly as a consequence of the general decline in enemy activity and partly due to the Communists' evasive tactics, IOD fire misssions during October, November, and December accounted for only 62 enemy dead, in contrast to 1,153 claimed in the first three months of 1970.[20] Despite this decline, in the estimation of artillery commanders, IOD employment had increased the effectiveness of the artillery. "It was the best investment of artillery assets," recalled Colonel Rudzis. "The IOD personnel represented approximately four percent of the artillery population, but even if it had required 20 percent, it would be well worth it for the functions that they performed." Rudzis added that "they were not only the 'eyes' of the artillery on a 24 hour per day basis," but they also provided timely intelligence to infantry units, from companies right up to the division.[21]

In addition to observation posts, the 11th Marines relied heavily on aerial reconnaissance to locate targets, especially in the Rocket Belt around Da Nang. The regiment had its own aerial observation section, employing Huey gunships and light observation helicopters (UH-6s) of the Americal Division's 123d and 282d Aviation Battalions. According to Colonel Rudzis, the 11th Marines had, in effect, their own aviation unit from July 1970 forward, with the OH-6 being the primary aircraft. The crew of the OH-6 consisted of a warrant officer pilot and a sergeant machine gunner. Adding a Marine aerial observer, the 11th Marines patrolled the Division AO daily in this highly maneuverable and versatile aircraft. "The helicopter was used not only on a routine patrol of the Danang Rocket Belt but also on intelligence missions to provide up to the minute information on unusual activities reported by other sources," said Rudzis. He added that the cooperation showed by Army aviation units was outstanding, saying that if a helicopter "was disabled or shot down, a replacement was provided from Chu Lai on the same day or the next one, so that the AO missions could be carried out on a daily basis."[22]

In addition to the light observation helicopters, the Army OH-1G Bird Dog observation planes of the 21st Reconnaissance Aircraft Company were used, as well as MAG-16 helicopters, for low-altitide visual reconnaissance missions. Batteries also frequently fired missions at sensor activations, and the artillery OPs were sited to cover many of the 1st Marine Division sensor fields. Radio interceptions provided by 1st Radio Battalion also were a source of targets.[23]

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A372603

A Marine gunner cleans the breech of his 175mm gun after firing. The M107 175mm gun had a range of 32,000 meters, the longest in the Marine inventory.

The 11th Marines planned much of its "preemptive and intelligence" fire with information from the 1st Marine Division Fire Support Information System (FSIS), renamed early in 1971, as the Tactical Information Deposit Retrieval System (TINDER). This system, inaugurated in 1968, was located in the Target Information Section of the Division FSCC. The section received reports of enemy movement, caches, rocket firings, and other sightings and activities from 25 sources, including OPs, sensors, reconnaissance patrols, prisoners, and agents. This information went to Force Logistic Command, where Data Processing Platoon 16 coded it and stored it on computer tape. Using a specially prepared program, the Force Logistic Command computer, at the request of unit commanders, could produce prompt reports, accompanied by map overlays, on all enemy sightings and contacts in a given area. The 11th Marines used this system to plot recurring patterns of enemy movement and directed unobserved fire against the most heavily traveled routes.[24]

According to Colonel Ezell, this sophisticated target analysis system had made "preemptive and intelligence" missions into an accurate, effective weapon. Other commanders disagreed. Lieutenant General McCutcheon, for one, remained unconvinced of the

value of unobserved artillery fire. At his insistence, the 11th Marines in late September drastically reduced preemptive and intelligence missions.[25]

During 1970-1971, the 11th Marines made much use of temporary fire support bases (FSBs) established and supplied entirely by helicopter and often located deep in enemy base areas. The 1st Marine Division and the 1st MAW had perfected their techniques for landing reconnaissance and security elements, engineers, construction equipment, guns, crews, and ammunition on remote peaks and could have batteries emplaced and firing within a few hours. By 1970, the 11th Marines had used a total of 65 firebase sites throughout Quang Nam. Most commanding hilltops in the province were cleared of large trees and pocked with gun pits, further simplifying the preparation of temporary FSBs. The direct support battalions routinely displaced 105mm howitzers, towed 155mm howitzers, and 4.2-inch mortars to provide fire support for infantry sweeps in the mountains. They developed weapon and equipment lists and organized mobile fire direction centers for helicopter-transportable provisional batteries. Periodically, the regiment conducted larger artillery deployments to support major operations, such as Pickens Forest or Imperial Lake.[26]

In a variation on the temporary firebase technique the 11th Marines conducted a number of "artillery raids," rapid heliborne deployments of batteries to advanced positions for attacks on reconnaissance and intelligence targets which were beyond the range of the more permanent firebases or protected by terrain. During May and June 1970, the regiment conducted a series of raids west of Thoung Duc. This CIDG camp, 30 miles southwest of Da Nang, had come under per-

Marine artillerymen from the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines on Fire Support Base Ryder make last-minute adjustments after receiving new direction coordinates before preparing to fire their weapon. The 2d Battalion relieved the 3d Battalion on Ryder in late 1970.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373811

sistent mortar and rocket fire from Communist positions in Base Area 112, beyond the range of the Marines' nearest 175mm guns. To bring the Communists' positions under fire, Colonel Ernest R. Reid, Jr., commander of the 11th Marines, decided to move light artillery forward into the Thuong Duc area. He selected Hill 510, a peak five miles west-southwest of the CIDG camp, to be the firing position. This hill overlooks the confluence of the Cai River and Boung River Valleys, much-travelled enemy supply and infiltration routes. Marine reconnaissance teams frequently used it as an OP and radio relay site.*

The raids began at first light on 30 May. Partially protected by heavy ground fog, a reconnaissance team and four mortar crews from the Mortar Battery, 2d Battalion, 11th Marines landed on Hill 510. By 0655, the mortars were ready to fire, but the mist delayed the first mission until 1000. During the day, the mortars fired 530 rounds at 26 targets, including suspected enemy troop and rocket positions, bunkers, a base camp, and a group of enemy spotted by the reconnaissance team. At 1120, three rockets, launched from a position southwest of Hill 510, flew directly over the Mortar Battery toward ARVN positions to the north. The Marines, who could see the rocket firing site, replied with 140 mortar rounds and the rocker fire stopped. At 1620, helicopters extracted the battery, which had suffered no losses in men or equipment, and returned it to An Hoa.[27]

On 2 June, the 11th Marines conducted a second raid, this time using three 105mm howitzers from Battery E, 2d Battalion to gain greater range. The battery remained on Hill 510 throughout the day and fired a total of 564 rounds. Targets taken under fire included a suspected ammunition cache, enemy troops sighted by a reconnaissance team, and rocket positions located by radio interceptions. The battery returned to An Hoa by helicopter at 1740. The 11th Marines repeated this operation on 17, 20, 22, and 29 June, each time with weapons and crews from the 2d Battalion. In all but the last raid, the regiment employed provisional composite batteries of two 105mm howitzers and two 4.2-inch mortars. The final raid, on 29 June, involved three 105s. The raids met no significant enemy opposition and resulted in no losses of men or equipment. Damage to the enemy was impossible to determine, but the raids apparently disrupted Communist operations against Thuong Duc. Various size artillery raids continued until the final redeployments and reduction of the Marine TAOR; the largest raid, Operation Catawba Falls in September 1970, covered the 5th Marines' movement from An Hoa to the Que Son Valley.[28]

Target clearance continued to be a complicated, often frustrating process for Marine artillerymen. "Frustration on the artillery side was principally due to not being able to provide the rapid, responsive fire support supported units would expect to receive," recalled Colonel John D. Shoup, who was assistant division fire support coordinator in early 1970.[29] Except in "Specified Strike Zones,"* where artillery and other supporting arms could fire without restriction, a call for fire had to be checked ("cleared") with the appropriate U.S., ARVN, or South Korean Marine commands and with South Vietnamese political authorities before the mission could be executed. Under throughly planned procedures, the 1st Marine Division FSCC** coordinated all air and artillery supporting fires within the division TAOR. Each regiment, through its own FSCC, coordinated fire within its TAOR, as did each infantry battalion. The regiments and battalions were primarily responsible for maintaining contact with allied military and civil headquarters within their areas of operation and for obtaining fire clearances from them. The 1st Division FSCC, in close coordination with the DASC, operated the Sav-A-Plane*** system to prevent aircraft from flying into the artillery's line of fire.[30]

Tactical innovation, such as Kingfisher patrols often aggravated the already complex system of controlling

*For details of reconnaissance activities in this area, see the "Reconnaissance Operations" section in this chapter.

*The division TAOR was divided into three types of fire zones: no-fire zones, usually GVN-controlled population centers, where supporting arms could not be used; precleared fire zones, where supporting arms could fire during a specific time period; and specified strike ("free-fire") zones. 1stMarDiv OpO 301A-YR, dtd 10Dec69, Anx E.

**A unit's FSCC was supervised by the G-3 or S-3 and consisted of artillery liaison personnel from the command and liaison officers representing the available, supporting arms, e.g. air and naval gunfire. While not a link in the chain of fire support requests, it monitored the requests from forward observers to fire support units and could interfere in cases involving the safety of troops or to prevent fire from disrupting the scheme of maneuver.

***For Sav-A-Plane, the DASC was informed daily by the FSCC of the line of fire of all artillery missions being fired. Aircraft crossing division airspace checked in with the DASC, which could divert them around the danger zones, in consultation with the FSCC, and, depending on the relative priority of the air and artillery missions, could issue a "check fire" to the artillery. Maj John J. McNamara, OIC Da Nang DASC, "Sav-A-Plane," *The Professional*, Feb70, copy in 1st MAW ComdC, Feb70.

supporting fires. "They were initially planned with due regard for artillery support but in operation found that support nonexistent due to lack of timely clearance in other 'free-fire' zones," said Colonel Shoup. "Preclearance of fire zones would have been tantamount, in my view, to advertising that Kingfisher was on the way, although efforts were made to do this without much success."[31] Initially, calls for fire from IOD observation posts also created special clearance and coordination difficulties for the artillery and infantry. The OPs, controlled by the 11th Marines, directed many missions within the infantry regimental TAORs. While the artillery observers cleared all fires through the FSCCs of the concerned infantry units, both fire support requests and reports of enemy activity remained within the artillery communication network and were not transmitted immediately to battalion and regimental commanders. Colonel Wilcox of the 1st Marines "found that if we didn't watch it . . . the IOD was reporting targets directly back through FSCC channels to the 11th Marines, and they were reporting enemy running around in my TAOR and having them shot at." Wilcox made sure that his "battalion commanders, through their fire support coordinators, had an absolute obligation to pass that word on, and the IOD operators had an absolute obligation to talk to my infantry commander[s] . . . so that the information flowed back through the infantry channels."[32] Aside from this problem, and from the perpetual difficulty in coordinating artillery clearances and Sav-A-Plane information with the South Vietnamese, by late 1970, the 11th Marines had what Colonel Reid called, "probably the optimum fire support coordination system, balanced . . . on the one hand on the side of safety, and on the other, responsiveness."[33]

In accord with III MAF's emphasis on Vietnamization, the 11th Marines assisted ARVN operations and helped to train and improve the Quang Da Special Zone artillery. The Marine artillery battalions regularly fired missions in support of 51st ARVN Regiment, Regional and Popular Force units, and CIDGs and often assigned forward observers to Vietnamese commands. At Hai Van Pass, the Mortar Battery, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines; the 1/25 Regional Force Group; and an element of the 101st Airborne Division established a combined combat operations and fire support coordination center at the 1/25 Group CP to ensure rapid Marine response to RF calls for fire. This system short-cut the political clearance requirement by allowing the RF group to give clearance for its own area of operations. If a mission required more than mortar fire, the request went from the joint FSCC to the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, which in turn cleared it with the 1st Marines fire support coordination center.[34]

The 11th Marines helped Quang Da Special Zone to organize its own fire support coordination center and conducted training programs for ARVN artillerymen in surveying, heavy gun motor transport, and 4.2-inch mortar employment. In April 1970, the regiment formed two Firing Battery Instructional Training Teams, each made up of two Marine artillerymen and an ARVN officer and NCO. These teams spent week-long periods with the batteries of the two QDSZ artillery battalions, the 44th and 64th, teaching gunnery and firing procedures.

The Marine artillery battalions also provided training assistance. The Mortar Battery of the 2d Battalion conducted forward observer schools for RFs and PFs working with CAPs. These efforts brought noticeable improvements in the South Vietnamese artillery units but could not remedy its greatest deficiency: a shortage of crews and artillery pieces to cover Quang Nam Province after the Marines left. "I don't believe that they have enough artillery to do the job, if we are displaced," Colonel Ezell concluded. "They only have two small-size battalions . . . . This would certainly be insufficient."[35*]

Marine artillery strength declined rapidly during late 1970 and early 1971. In Keystone Robin Alpha, during August, September, and October, the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines redeployed with the 7th Marines. Paralleling the shift of the 5th Marines to replace the 7th, the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines moved south to Ross, Ryder, and Baldy. Headquarters Battery and Battery M, 4th Battalion, 11th Marines also withdrew in Keystone Robin Alpha, leaving behind two self-propelled 155mm batteries, one of which was attached to each remaining direct support battalion. From the heavy artillery, the 1st and 3d 175mm Gun and 1st 8-inch Howitzer Batteries redeployed. By the end of 1970, only 74 Marine artillery pieces remained in Vietnam.

When the 5th Marines redeployed in Keystone Robin Charlie, during February-March 1971, it was accompanied by the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines and Battery L, 4th Battalion. On 28 March, as part of Keystone Robin Charlie, Headquarters Battery and the regimen-

*The establishment of separate Regional and Popular Force artillery platoons partially alleviated this shortage. See Chapter 10.

tal colors of the 11th Marines embarked for the United States. The artillery regiment's 1st Battalion, reinforced by Battery K, 4th Battalion and the 3d 8-inch Howitzer Battery, remained behind as the artillery element of the 3d MAB, redeploying with the brigade in May and June.

Throughout 1970-1971, the volume of Marine artillery fire diminished. In January 1970, the 11th Marines fired 178,062 rounds during 19,250 missions. By December, the amount of fire had fallen to 26,999 rounds for 2,902 missions. The volume rose again, to 35,408 rounds during 3,044 missions in January 1971. It remained at about that level during February, then fell precipitously with the final redeployments and contractions of the Marine TAOR/TAOI. Naval gunfire employment followed a similar pattern, dropping from 5,541 rounds from six ships during January 1970 to 217 rounds from one ship in December, then increasing to 370 rounds from a single ship in January 1971 before beginning a final decline.[36]

This reduction in artillery fire resulted in part from the diminishing number of weapons, but it also reflected lessened usage, the consequence of both fewer enemy sightings and contacts and also of the cutback in preemptive and intelligence missions. In January 1970, the 11th Marines had fired an average of 1,141 rounds from each of its 156 tubes. In December 1970, with 74 tubes, the regiment fired only 365 rounds per tube. Between 15 and 17 January 1971, General Leonard F. Chapman, Jr., the Commandant, paid a last visit to III MAF in Vietnam. When Chapman returned to Washington, General McCutcheon recalled, he told McCutcheon "that the whole three days he was in Da Nang, he didn't hear one artillery round. He was pretty conscious of that, being an artilleryman."[37]

Reconnaissance Operations, 1970-1971

At the beginning of 1970, III MAF reconnaissance forces consisted of the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion and the 1st and 3d Force Reconnaissance Companies. The two Force Reconnaissance companies were controlled by III MAF, while the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion was under its parent 1st Marine Division.*

The 1st and 3d Force Reconnaissance Companies, directed by the III MAF Surveillance and Reconnaissance Center,* conducted patrols deep in enemy base areas, usually beyond the 1st Marine Division TAOR. Based at Phu Bai, the 3d Force Reconnaissance Company concentrated its efforts on the A Shau Valley, a major Communist infiltration route and assembly area in western Thua Thien. Patrols from this company, usually inserted and extracted by helicopters from the U.S. Army's 2d Squadron, 17th U.S. Cavalry, ventured far into the mountains to locate enemy units, camps, and storage sites. They spotted targets for artillery fire and B-52 strikes and occasionally fought small Communist units. During January 1970, the company observed or encountered 159 enemy and killed 26 in eight separate engagements with losses of only one Marine killed and 14 wounded. The company also directed 38 artillery fire missions.[38]

The 1st Force Reconnaissance Company, working from Da Nang, conducted long-range patrols in Quang Nam and Quang Tin Provinces. During January, this company saw much less action than the 3d. The company completed 13 patrols, sighted 12 enemy, and killed one, with no casualties.[39]

During February and March 1970, the Keystone Bluejay redeployment reduced force reconnaissance strength, and the III MAF-XXIV Corps exchange of roles ended separate Force Reconnaissance operations. The 3d Force Reconnaissance Company ceased combat activities in February, although the unit, almost at zero strength, remained in Vietnam until July. With the breakup of the III MAF Surveillance and Reconnaissance Center, both the cadred 3d and the still active 1st Force Reconnaissance Companies were placed under the operational control of the 1st Marine Division. The 1st Force Company, attached to Lieutenant Colonel William C. Drumright's 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, continued operations as a division reconnaissance unit.[40]

At the beginning of 1970, the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion was over strength; it had five letter companies instead of the usual four. Company A, 5th Reconnaissance Battalion was also attached, but it redeployed during Keystone Bluejay. The battalion performed a variety of missions. It furnished teams to support in-

*Force reconnaissance companies usually operate under a landing force commander, providing him with preassault reconnaissance and long-range reconnaissance after the landing. The division reconnaissance battalion, under operational control of the division, supports division operations.

*The Surveillance and Reconnaissance Center integrated all forms of information—signal, sensor, ground/aerial surveillance, POW and documentary—for use in III MAF planning from November 1969 to March 1970. For details on its organization and operations, see Chapter 14.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373160

Sgt Michael L. Larkins, left, and 2dLt Louis E. Daugherty from the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion display their unusual trophy, the carcass of a 300-pound tiger. The animal charged the Marines who were on patrol in the jungles northwest of Da Nang.

fantry search and destroy operations, secure firebases, and locate targets for artillery raids. Scuba* divers from the battalion checked bridges in the 1st Marine Division TAOR for underwater demolitions and searched streams for submerged cave entrances and weapon caches. Detachments from the battalion also protected four of the IOD observation posts.

Patrolling the western fringes of the division TAOR was the reconnaissance battalion's principal function. In these generally mountainous areas, the enemy could move less cautiously because of the cover provided by the jungle canopy. Operating in six-man teams, reconnaissance units monitored movement over the network of trails which linked the rugged base areas to the fertile lowlands surrounding Da Nang. Each team included an officer or NCO patrol leader, a radioman, three specially trained riflemen, and a Navy corpsman. During most of 1970, the battalion had 48 such teams available for duty. Normally, about half the teams were in the field, scattered from Elephant Valley to the far reaches of Base Area 112. Teams not patrolling or on other assignments protected the battalion cantonment near Division Ridge, underwent refresher training, and prepared for their next mission.

Reconnaissance patrolling had become a well-developed skill. Each team member backpacked 65-70 pounds of food, ammunition, and equipment to sustain him for as many as six days in the field. Helicopters lifted the teams to their assigned operating areas. After insertion, teams worked their way along streambeds, followed enemy trails, or "broke brush" across country, carefully noting and reporting details of terrain and enemy activity. Some teams tried to take

*Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus.

prisoners or, using the Stingray* concept of operations, concealed themselves where they could direct artillery and air strikes on enemy troops and base camps. At the end of their assigned five- or six-day missions, or when they were discovered and attacked by the enemy, helicopters extracted the reams.

Patrolling resulted in a steady stream of small contacts. During June 1970, for example, the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion conducted 130 patrols, sighting 834 Communists, and directed 120 artillery fire missions and 25 air strikes. Reconnaissance battalion Marines were credited with 198 enemy killed and the capture of three individual weapons, at a cost of 2 Marines dead, 15 wounded, and 9 nonbattle casualties.[41]

For the individual reconnaissance Marine, this level of activity entailed a grueling routine. Lieutenant Colonel Drumright, the battalion commander, reported:

> These kids . . . work very hard. You put them in the field five days; they're out of the field three. Their first day back is cleaning gear. Their second day, they train . . . . They go through throwing hand grenades again, scouting and patrolling, immediate action drill, which is being able to get that first shot off the fastest, and . . . we do night work with them. So they never really have a day off.[42]

The primary purpose of reconnaissance patrols was to obtain information, usually through surveillance of enemy movement. Frequently reconnaissance teams directed artillery and air strikes on VC/NVA units while avoiding contact with them, but teams often found themselves involved in close combat. Some fights erupted from ambushes set by teams or from efforts to take prisoners; others were meeting engagements with small NVA or VC elements.[43]

In the first months of 1970, many contacts resulted from an aggressive counter-reconnaissance effort begun at the orders of General Binh, the *Front 4* commander. At Binh's direction, North Vietnamese regulars and main force Viet Cong formed 15 to 25-man teams to protect their base areas. Some of these teams carried captured M16s and wore American clothing and camouflage paint to confuse the Marines during firefights. The counter-reconnaissance units watched for helicopters inserting Marine teams and signaled the Marines' arrival with rifle shots, then tried to close in and attack the Marines before they could leave the landing zone.

The Marines responded to these enemy tactics by making false insertions, often complete with helicopter gunship and fixed-wing landing zone preparations, before actually putting in a team. To avoid forewarning the enemy, some insertions were made without LZ preparation fires. As a result of these varied measures, most reconnaissance teams were able to move out of their landing zones before the enemy arrived. The Communists then tried to track the Marines across country. These deadly games of hide-and-seek frequently culminated in firefights and emergency extractions. Due to Marine small arms proficiency and the availability of lavish air and artillery support for teams in contact, the enemy invariably suffered many more casualties in these engagements than they inflicted.[44]

On 14 June 1970, a team from Company E, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion fought the battalion's most severe patrol action of the year.[45] The ream, identified by its radio call sign "Flakey Snow," consisted of five enlisted Marines, a corpsman, and two South Korean Marines assigned to the patrol as members of a combined allied reconnaissance training program. Helicopters inserted the patrol at 1122 on the 14th in the southwestern Que Sons about five miles west of FSB Ryder. Although deep in the mountains, "Flakey Snow's" first area of operations was a level region with no jungle canopy, but a secondary growth of small trees, bushes, bamboo, and sharp-edged elephant grass. The team's arrival was unopposed, and it moved northward from its landing zone along a wide trail that showed signs of recent, heavy use. After about an hour of uneventful walking, the Marines crossed a small stream and turned eastward on an intersecting trail. This trail, also obviously well traveled, ran toward a hill where the patrol leader, Sergeant Frank E. Diaz, planned to spend the night.

Clouds closed in and heavy rain was falling. About 1220, Diaz called a halt along the trail to wait until the rain stopped. There the Marines heard heavy machine gun and automatic weapons fire. Although no bullets seemed to be coming toward them, the members of "Flakey Snow" formed a defensive perimeter with only the elephant grass for cover, and quietly readied their weapons. As they did, two Viet Cong, both armed with AK-47s, came walking up the trail, "right into us," Diaz recalled. The Marines shot and killed both of them, but the firing gave away their position. Diaz at once reported by radio that his team was in contact.

*For details of the origin of Stingray, see Jack Shulimson, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam, 1966* (Washington: History and Museums Division, HQMC, 1981), p. 175.

Contact quickly became heavy. From positions north, east, and west of the Marines, an enemy unit, later estimated to have been at least 50 men, opened fire with 12.7mm machine guns and automatic weapons. The Marines, with their backs to the stream they had just crossed, hugged the ground and returned fire with M16s and their one M79 grenade launcher. Whether the enemy was a counter-reconnaissance unit or simply a large force encountered by chance was never established, but it was obvious that they were determined to overwhelm "Flakey Snow." "They really wanted to get us," Diaz reported later, "for whatever reason they had in mind." The enemy began rushing the Marine position in groups of three and four, firing and throwing grenades. Some closed to within 30 feet of the Marines before being cut down. Bodies piled up in front of the patrol. Diaz had his men pull two or three of the closest into a barricade. One American Marine was mortally wounded and another was hit in the shoulder by grenade fragments. A Korean received a severe leg wound. "All this time," Diaz recalled, "we could hear people moaning and groaning on both sides . . . . The enemy just kept coming, and we just kept shooting and shooting."

Diaz had called for an aerial observer, and an OV-10 arrived over the patrol at 1245. The aircraft at once began strafing the enemy positions, causing some secondary explosions and more "loud crying and moaning." At 1300, Cobra gunships arrived on station and added their machine guns and rockets to Marine firepower. The closeness of the enemy to "Flakey Snow" prevented use of artillery, but according to Diaz the gunships were "really accurate and a great help in getting us all out of there." In spite of this punishment, the determined enemy hung on. Their fire slackened as the helicopters made their strafing passes, but then resumed.

At 1345, CH-46s from HMM-263 arrived to extract the team, but the wounded could not be hoisted out. The pilot of one of the Sea Knights, Major Peter E. Benet, executive officer of HMM-263, managed to land close to the team, with the nose of his aircraft hanging over the stream and the rear wheels on the bank. Benet's copilot, 1st Lieutenant Peter F. Goetz, reported that as the helicopter settled in, "we had to cut down through the elephant grass with our blades, the elephant grass was so high."[46]

Diaz at first thought that the helicopter had been shot down. Then he saw the tailgate opening and began moving his men toward it while he and the reconnaissance battalion extraction officer, who had jumped out of the gate with a rifle, covered the withdrawal. Under continuing enemy fire, the reconnaissance Marines scrambled on board carrying their injured and dying. A few enemy tried to rush the withdrawing team, but Diaz and the extraction officer gunned them down. Lieutenant Goetz, monitoring the helicopter's radios, saw another enemy "pop up, right about out 11 o'clock, with an AK . . . . It was really fortunate that one of the Cobras was passing over us at the time and spotted him and blasted him with some rockets."

At 1353, the helicopter lifted off with all members of "Flakey Snow." Diaz and his men had only a magazine of ammunition left between them and a single M79 round; the helicopter crew had expended all the ammunition from their two .50-caliber machine guns. At the price of one American Marine dead of wounds, another slightly wounded, and a South Korean Marine severely injured, "Flakey Snow" had killed at least 18 enemy in front of the patrol's position. An unknown number of enemy had been killed or wounded farther away, either by small arms and grenades, or by OV-10 and helicopter guns and rockets. Sergeant Diaz reported that "the firefight was so intense, and the fire was coming from so many directions, that the enemy themselves had killed their own people, trying to get to us."*

While no other fight during 1970-1971 equaled "Flakey Snow's" in severity, reconnaissance teams continued to meet aggressive enemy counteraction, either from chance contacts with regular units or special counter-reconnaissance teams. On 3 September, a six-man patrol from Company C, inserted in the mountains just south of Elephant Valley, came into immediate contact with at least 15-20 enemy who tried to surround the team. After a firefight in which the Marines killed three enemy and suffered one man wounded, the team was extracted after only 14 minutes on the ground. As soon as the extraction helicopters departed, the 11th Marines fired 225 105mm rounds into the landing zone, and fixed-wing jets also struck the area.[47]

Artillery bombardment and air strikes were a standard 1st Reconnaissance Battalion tactic after an extraction under fire. According to Lieutenant Colonel Drumright, a reconnaissance team, under these cir-

*For his part in this action, Sergeant Diaz was awarded the Silver Star. Another member of the patrol received the Bronze Star with Combat "V".

cumstances, acted on the enemy as "a little bucket of honey" acted on bees. He explained:

> The bees, they'd swarm all around. And then you'd pull the bucket of honey out and you'd work it over, and then you get all the bees that don't run off . . . . You get them out of their caves. They have to come out of their caves to fight.[48]

By late 1970, the enemy had become more cautious about attacking reconnaissance teams. Instead, their counter-reconnaissance forces began shadowing Marine patrols, following them and signalling their location with rifle shots. The NVA and VC would engage a patrol only if it approached an important base camp or cache. The enemy occasionally used dogs to track the Marines. Reconnaissance teams sought to evade the enemy by night movement; they would establish a night position about sunset, then quietly shift position after dark. To temporarily kill the enemy dogs' sense of smell, the Marines often scattered CS crystals on trails and around night positions.[49]

Combat frequently erupted when reconnaissance patrols unexpectedly burst into occupied camps. To protect their hideouts from air strikes, artillery bombardments, and infantry sweeps, the enemy began locating them in the dense vegetation below the crests on the reverse slopes of ridges. They rarely left discernable trails into these positions. To increase their chances of finding camps, reconnaissance teams often hacked their way through the vegetation on the slopes rather than following the easier natural routes along crests or streambeds. "Breaking brush" in this way, teams occasionally walked into camps while enemy troops were still in them. When this happened, a team would attack immediately, moving quickly through the camp, shooting at any enemy they saw and throwing grenades into huts, bunkers, and caches. According to Lieutenant Colonel Drumright:

> Our guys could outshoot theirs. They could throw a hand grenade further. They could think a little faster. They used a . . . technique of just going right through the camp throwing hand grenades into every hole and bunker you could find, usually about two or three going through the camp, and the other two or three covering . . . . Then they'd move back out of the area and try to saturate the thing with artillery and air.[50]

Patrolling deep in the mountains had its hazards even when no enemy were encountered. In May, a tiger attacked a 1st Force Reconnaissance Company patrol leader while the patrol was in its night position, dragged him off into the brush, and killed him. In September, a 1st Reconnaissance Battalion patrol lost two men killed and two others seriously injured in an accident during an unopposed extraction. The battalion suffered its most severe noncombat loss on 18 November, when its commander, Lieutenant Colonel William C. Leftwich, and nine other reconnaissance Marines died in a helicopter crash in the Que Sons.[51] Lieutenant Colonel Bernard E. Trainor, who had previous reconnaissance experience, then commanded 1st Reconnaissance Battalion until its redeployment in the spring of 1971.

With five years of experience behind them, the division and wing had developed well tested techniques and equipment for inserting, supporting, and extracting reconnaissance teams.* To assure prompt artillery response to calls for fire and at the same time prevent accidental shelling of friendly units, the division established a special reconnaissance zone for each deployed patrol in which only that patrol could direct fire missions. The 11th Marines usually designated a battery or platoon to support each patrol and stationed a liaison officer at the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion CP to assist in fire planning and coordination.

The 1st MAW's quick-reaction helicopter package, Mission 80, could be used for emergency extractions of teams, among other tasks. Reconnaissance units had developed standard procedures for teams involved in a contact from which they could not extricate themselves. Normally the first step would be to call in the nearest OV-10 to locate the unit and provide initial suppressive fires. The wing would then dispatch two Cobra gunships and two CH-46s to lift the Marines out. While the Cobras worked the enemy over, to within 25 yards of the reconnaissance team if necessary, a CH-46 maneuvered to an LZ or lowered a special extraction device. Final authority to pull out a team in trouble rested with the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion commander. "When it happens out there, it

*Lieutenant General Bernard E. Trainor, a former commander of the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, later commented on the impressive "choreographed" firepower including helicopter gunships, fixed-wing aircraft, and artillery available to Marine teams being extracted out of difficult situations: "By routinely devastating an area immediately upon a team emergency extraction, it was surmised that the VC/NVA would become conditioned to fear contact with a Recon team because it meant that the sky would fall upon them . . . . Whether this drill really did have the desired effect on the enemy, we'll never know. But there is no doubt that it had a terrific and positive effect on the psychological outlook of the Recon Marines." LtGen Bernard E. Trainor, Comments on draft MS, 13Jan86 (Vietnam Comment File).

happens very quickly," Lieutenant Colonel Drumright reported.* "And the key . . . is to very quickly get the OV-10 and start the gunships out and make up your mind . . . whether to leave them in or take them out."[52]** Some of the most skillful patrol leaders could maneuver their men out of a contact and continue their missions, but the battalion usually followed the more prudent course of immediately withdrawing an engaged team and reinserting it later.

A new piece of equipment, the Special Patrol Insertion/Extraction (SPIE) line, made it easier and safer for teams to get in and out of small mountain and jungle landing zones. To put teams in or take them out of sites where a helicopter could not land, the Marines had previously used a 120-foot ladder which was lowered from the tail ramp. Because of its weight, the ladder was hard to maneuver in narrow spaces, and in hot weather at high elevations helicopters often had difficulty lifting it with Marines hanging onto it. In these situations, the SPIE, a strong nylon line, proved a practicable alternative. Much lighter than the ladder and more compact when stowed in a helicopter, the line could be dropped quickly through small openings in the jungle. Reconnaissance team members, who wore a special harness, then hooked themselves onto the line, and the helicopter lifted them straight up and flew back to base trailing the Marines behind it. If necessary, Marines could fire their weapons while attached to the SPIE rig; many found it more comfortable to ride in flight than the ladder.[53]

To train reconnaissance Marines for their exacting job, the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion conducted periodic 11-day indoctrination courses for all newly arrived personnel. The course, supervised by the battalion S-3, included instruction and practice in the use of the PRC-25 radio, map reading, first aid, rappelling down cliffs and from helicopters, air and artillery forward observer procedures, and combat intelligence reporting. New reconnaissance Marines also practiced scuba diving and rubber boat handling. Weapons refresher training and physical conditioning received emphasis throughout the course. According to Lieutenant Colonel Drumright, "It was strictly scouting and patrolling, and learning to shoot . . . first and . . . shoot straight and . . . to throw a hand grenade. Learn to hide. Learn to move. Get him in physical condition so he can outwalk the enemy." The course ended with the planning and execution of a practice patrol in a safe area.[54]*

Under an agreement between the 1st Marine Division, Quang Da Special Zone, and the 2d ROK Marine Corps Brigade, the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion conducted three-week training courses for ARVN and Korean troops. During 1970, the battalion instructed 230 members of the ARVN 1st Ranger Battalion, as well as the reconnaissance companies of the 51st Regiment and the Korean Marine brigade. Vietnamese and Korean graduates of the course then participated in Marine patrols, one or two men to a team. The South Korean Marines who took part in the "Flakey Snow" fight were trained under this program. Both Korean and South Vietnamese reconnaissance troops learned quickly and performed well with the Marines.[55]

The battalion also trained combat operations center and communications personnel for the allies, in the hope that the South Vietnamese, in particular, would eventually carry out their own independent reconnaissance effort. Repeatedly, the 1st Marine Division pressed Quang Da Special Zone to begin deploying all-Vietnamese patrols in a reconnaissance zone separate from that patrolled by the Marines. The South Vietnamese continually refused, pleading a lack of manpower, helicopters, and radios. They preferred to continue combined patrols with the Marines. The South Vietnamese did not have enough helicopters to support the kind of wide-ranging reconnaissance program the Marines carried on. For the reconnaissance missions they ran, they relied on foot patrols from

*Lieutenant Colonel Drumright had been relieved on 11 August 1970 by Lieutenant Colonel Edmund J. Regan, Jr. Lieutenant Colonel Leftwich in turn replaced Regan on 13 September. 1st Recon Bn ComdCs, Aug-Sept 70.

**Another former commander of the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, Lieutenant General Bernard E. Trainor, later commented, ". . . a team normally did not ask for an emergency extract unless they really had an emergency . . . . In truth, however, I did have to veto a few emergency extract requests where in my judgment the situation was not sufficiently threatening to warrant the risky rescue procedure. It's times like that when the responsibility of command takes on real meaning." LtGen Bernard E. Trainor, Comments on draft ms, 13Jan86. (Vietnam Comment File).

*Lieutenant General Bernard E. Trainor, who commanded the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion in 1970-1971, also emphasized the importance of the initial training in his comments on the draft manuscript. He later wrote, "Even sleeping had its SOP—no lying—a team would 'harbor-up' in the concealment of the undergrowth; it would form a circle facing outboard back-to-back, shoulder-to-shoulder; all quadrants covered. Those not on watch slept sitting up with chins on chests. Not comfortable but do-able. Contact and communication could thus be made by touch rather than by voice." LtGen Bernard E. Trainor, Comments on draft ms, 13Jan86 (Vietnam Comment File).

Marine Corps Historical Collection

An aerial photograph shows the helicopter landing pad and Southeast Asia huts that serve as the quarters and offices of the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion's Camp Reasoner.

fixed bases. Marine commanders recognized that the Vietnamese would be limited to such short range operations after the Americans withdrew.[56]

The Keystone Robin Alpha redeployments drastically reduced Marine reconnaissance strength. During August, the 1st Force Reconnaissance Company stood down and left for the United States, leaving a subunit of two officers and 29 enlisted men attached to the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion. The reconnaissance battalion itself deactivated Company E in August, and in September Companies C and D left Vietnam. These withdrawals halved the number of available reconnaissance teams, from 48 to 24. The 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, then under Lieutenant Colonel Leftwich, turned over protection of three of the four IOD sites to the infantry regiments and reorganized its two remaining letter companies. Each company would consist of two three-team platoons and one four-team platoon. With these rearrangements, Leftwich planned to have all 24 teams available for operations, and an average of 12 in the field at a time.[57]

With fewer teams available and with operations in the mountains restricted by the fall-winter monsoon, the reconnaissance battalion concentrated much of its patrolling in areas closer to the populated lowlands. As part of Operation Imperial Lake, beginning in early October, the battalion saturated the Que Son Mountains with patrols, keeping 8-10 teams continuously in the area. These teams worked closely with infantry quick reaction forces in an effort to deny more territory to the enemy while using fewer Marines. Smaller saturation operations covered Charlie Ridge and eastern Elephant Valley.

Instead of being inserted and extracted by helicopter, most of the teams participating in saturation patrolling worked from platoon patrol bases in the mountains. The 1st Reconnaissance Battalion set up the first of these on 5 October, on Hill 845 in the Que

Sons. Three teams used the hill as a CP, radio relay station, and resting place. Remaining for 13 days, they fanned out on foot on assigned patrol missions. One team usually rested at the patrol base, constituting a reaction force while the other two were deployed. From then on, the battalion maintained a patrol base continuously in the Que Sons and periodically established bases on Charlie Ridge and in Elephant Valley. When weather often restricted helicopter operations, teams working out of patrol bases, once inserted, could remain longer in the field and reinforce each other in the event of a major contact. The teams also gained an advantage of surprise, since no helicopter activities, except for those involved in setting up the patrol base, signalled the reconnaissance Marines' entry into their operating areas.[58]

Under Lieutenant Colonel Trainor's guidance the battalion continued this pattern of operation later in 1970 and during the first months of 1971. Its patrol base on Charlie Ridge became part of Operation Upshur Stream late in January. On both Charlie Ridge and in the Que Sons, infantry platoons took over the protection of reconnaissance patrol bases, while reconnaissance teams did most of the patrolling during Upshur Stream and Imperial Lake. Lieutenant Colonel Trainor observed that his reconnaissance teams usually had the "advantage of the initiative." He later wrote that during his command tenure "no team was ever ambushed; on the contrary, it was the teams that did the ambushing."[59]

During late 1970 and early 1971, reconnaissance sightings of enemy troops and reconnaissance-inflicted enemy casualties grew steadily fewer. This decline reflected both reduced Marine reconnaissance activity and the shift of most patrolling to areas closer to Da Nang. The low level of action also indicated an apparent decline in enemy strength and aggressiveness. In December 1970, the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion sighted only 162 NVA and VC during 56 patrols, called 10 artillery fire missions and three air strikes, killed 23 enemy, and captured nine weapons. In the same month, the battalion lost three Marines wounded in action and seven nonbattle casualties. Action continued at this rate during January and February 1971.[60]

On 14 March 1971, the battalion began its Keystone Robin Charlie redeployment. On that day, the Headquarters and Service Company and Company B ceased operations. After a farewell ceremony on the 19th, these units left Da Nang on the 24th with the battalion colors, bound for Camp Pendleton. Company A of the battalion, the reconnaissance element of the 3d MAB, continued operations until 28 April, when it extracted its last two deployed teams from Sherwood Forest, west of Da Nang, and from Elephant Valley. On 1 May, the company stood down; by the 13th, the last reconnaissance Marines had left Vietnam.[61]

CHAPTER 18

Logistics, 1970-1971

Supplying III MAF—FLC Phases Down—The End of Naval Support Activity Da Nang
Engineer Support—Motor Transport—Medical Services

Supplying III MAF

Throughout its last year and a half of operations in Vietnam, III MAF continued to rely for supply, maintenance, and service support on Force Logistic Command (FLC). At the beginning of 1970, Brigadier General Mauro J. Padalino commanded FLC. A New Jersey native and combat veteran of World War II and Korea, Padalino as a colonel in 1965 had headed FLC's predecessor, the Force Logistic Support Group. The following year, he helped plan the organization of Force Logistic Command. He subsequently spent two years at the Marine Corps Supply Center, Barstow, California, and in June 1968 took command of the 3d Force Service Regiment (FSR) on Okinawa. He received his star in September 1969 and returned to Force Logistic Command two months later.

General Padalino had under him 396 Marine and 18 Navy officers and 7,391 Marine and 145 Navy enlisted men, most of them concentrated at Camp Books, the large FLC cantonment northwest of Da Nang. FLC, under operational control of III MAF and administrative conttol of FMFPac, was organized around the Headquarters and Service, Supply, and Maintenance Battalions of the 1st Force Service Regiment and also included Force Logistic Support Group (FLSG) B, the 7th Motor Transport Battalion, and the 1st and 3d Military Police Battalions.*[1]

The three 1st FSR battalions conducted most of the centralized logistic activities of FLC. Headquarters and Service Battalion provided administrative, communications, and motor transport assistance to other elements of Force Logistic Command and units of III MAF. It also operated the III MAF Transient Facility, through which passed all incoming and outgoing personnel, and the R&R Processing Center. Supply Battalion received, stored, and distributed all types of supplies. It also manned a central control point for stores accounting, operated ammunition supply points (ASPs), baked most of III MAF's breadstuffs, and packed and cleaned equipment for embarkation. Maintenance Battalion repaired all types of Marine ordnance and ground equipment, except for items requiring extensive overhaul or rebuilding, which were shipped to 3d FSR on Okinawa or to bases in Japan and the United States.*[2] The 3d FSR also provided critical supply, maintenance, and service support, and dispatched contact teams as requested by Commanding General, FLC and approved by Commanding General, FMFPac.

Force Logistic Support Group B, also headquartered at Camp Books, directly supported the 1st Marine Division. Composed of the Headquarters and Service, Maintenance, Supply, and Truck companies of the 1st Service Battalion,** the FLSG maintained logistic support units (LSUs) at Hill 55, An Hoa, and LZ Baldy to serve respectively the 1st, 5th, and 7th Marines. Each LSU consisted of two officers and an average of 65 enlisted Marines. It drew rations, fuel, and ammunition from FLC for issue to the battalions of its supported regiment, repaired many equipment and ordnance items, and operated a laundry. At Chu Lai, Sub-Unit 1 of FLSG-B, redesignated LSU-4 in April, issued ammunition and provided maintenance and laundry service for the 9th Engineer Battalion, MAGs -12 and -13, and the 1st Combined Action Group.***[3]

*The MP units were undet III MAF operational control. For details of their operations, see Chapter 14.

*Under Marine Corps doctrine, a force service regiment furnishes all types of logistic support to a division, a wing, and force troops when deployed, and when reinforced provides the nucleus for a MAF logistics group. The FSR requisitions, stores, and issues all classes of supplies to the ground forces and to Marine airbases. When authorized, the FSR also coordinates with other Services and theater commands to obtain common item support. The division and wing, through their own organic logistic units, perform most of their own internal maintenance and supply distribution. A unique feature of the FLC, as organized in Vietnam, was the assimilation of the divisions' organic service battalions into the centralized FLC structure as the nucleus of the FLSG.

**This was the organic logistic support element of the 1st Marine Division but in Vietnam such battalions were merged into FLC, which meant, among other things that they ceased to maintain their own separate supply stocks and accounts.

***Until the 3d Marine Division redeployed in November 1969, FLC had controlled two FLSGs: FLSG-A/1st Service Battalion at Da Nang and FLSG-B/3d Service Battalion at Dong Ha and Quang Tri. In November 1969, the 3d Service Battalion redeployed to Okinawa. FLSG-A then was deactivated and FLSG-B moved to Da Nang, where it assumed control of the 1st Service Battalion. FMFPac MarOps, Overview, pp. 56-57; FLSG-B ComdC, 15Mar66-16Sep70, in FLC ComdC, Sep70.

The entire complex III MAF logistic effort was built on the speed and accuracy of automated data processing. A computer arrived in Vietnam with the first logistic support elements. By early 1970, III MAF had consolidated control of the three data processing platoons (DPPs) now attached to FLC and a separate data processing section (DPS) with the 1st MAW under an Automated Services Center (ASC). The ASC used 500 separate computer programs to carry out over 300 record-keeping tasks. Computers produced financial reports, kept warehouse locator files and supply inventories up to date, did much of the requisitioning of supplies, and maintained unit pay records.[4]

The division and wing had their own logistic capabilities and responsibilities. Since the 1st Marine Division had given up its organic 1st Service Battalion to FLC and maintained no separate supply stock or account of its own, each of the division's battalions drew supplies and services from FLC, either directly or through a logistic support unit. Elements of a single battalion could draw from different elements of FLC. During March 1970, for example, the forward command post and Company L of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, located on Hill 65, received daily resupply directly from FLC by truck. Company I of the battalion, on Hill 37, was resupplied by truck from Hill 65. Company K, split between Hills 52 and 25, depended on helicopter lifts from the An Hoa LSU for its resupply. Company M, at An Hoa, drew directly from the LSU there.[5]

Helicopter resupply of the division depended heavily on the activities of the 1st Shore Party Battalion.* This battalion, organic to the division, deployed a company with each infantry regiment. Shore party helicopter support teams (HSTs) at each LSU assembled and prepared supplies for helicopter pickup. Landing zone control teams with the rifle companies located and marked LZs, briefed the crews of incoming helicopters, and supervised unloading. Liaison teams at battalion CPs received control teams; battalion commanders or S-4s consolidated the requests and assigned delivery priorities.[6]

When 1st Shore Party Battalion was redeployed during Keystone Bluejay in March 1970, Company C of the battalion remained in Vietnam, fulfilling the vital HST role until final redeployment on 30 April 1971. The nucleus of an HST team usually included two or more MOS 1381 shore party men and one or more communicators. The actual composition depended on such factors as the size of the supported unit, the permanency of the LZ, and the helicopter activity anticipated. Major James G. Dixon, who commanded Company C from August to November 1970, recalled the performance of his HST Marines:

> Corporals and sergeants and even lance corporals did yeoman work as "mini" air controllers at their respective LZs. They directed the movement of the helicopters; marshaled and positioned cargo; rigged assorted supplies and equipment; manifested and directed passengers; and effected the hookup of external slingloads. All these responsibilities combined to make the LZs hubs of activity and lifelines of the supported unit at remote fire support bases such as Ryder, Hill 510, and Dagger.*[7]

The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing drew upon both Navy and Marine sources for logistic support. The wing received nonaviation Marine Corps supplies and ammunition through Force Logistic Command; for replacement aircraft, spare aviation parts, most vehicles, and aircraft maintenance support, however, it relied on a complex of Navy agencies. Commander Naval Air Force, Pacific Fleet (ComNavAirPac), a subordinate of CinCPacFlt, was ultimately responsible for aviation logistic support of the 1st MAW, as well as of fleet carrier aircraft groups.** The wing requisitioned its Navy material from the Navy Supply Depots (NSDs) at Yokosuka, Japan, and Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines.*** Until September 1970, NSD Yokosuka, and after that date, NSD Subic, contracted for and oversaw major repair and rebuilding

*Shore party battalions were established originally to control movement of men and equipment across the beach. As helicopters became part of Marine amphibious operations, the battalions expanded their missions and training to include support of heliborne assaults.

*Assuming another role previously handled by the battalion, Company C also provided forklift support to division units.

**Commander, Naval Air Force, Pacific Fleet, was a "type commander" under CinCPacFlt, responsible for Pacific Fleet aircraft, carrier aircraft, and other assigned aviation units and facilities, including those of the Marines. Responsibilities of a type command, which FMFPac also was, included primarily logistic readiness and training. ComNavAirPac, ComdHist, 1970, OAB, NHD.

***In May 1970, Pacific Fleet decided to shift all aviation logistic support for units in the Western Pacific from NSD Yokosuka to NSD Subic. This changeover began on 1 September 1970 and was completed by mid-January 1971. All requisitions for aviation supplies after 1 September 1970 went through Subic. Commander, Service Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Operations of Service Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, FY 71, pp. 4-7; U.S. Naval Supply Depot, Subic Bay, R P., ComdHist, 1 Jan-31Dec70, pts. I and II; U.S. Naval Supply Depot, Yokosuka, ComdHist 1970 and ComdHist 1971; all in OAB, NHD.

of Marine and Navy aircraft at plants in Japan. On Marine logistic support questions, the wing usually dealt directly with FMFPac, and on Navy matters it communicated through FMFPac with ComNavAirPac and Naval Air Systems Command. Complicating the situation, Commander, Fleet Air, Western Pacific (ComFAirWestPac) occasionally gave instructions directly to the wing or its subordinate units regarding transfers of individual aircraft between Marine squadrons and fleet carriers. III MAF became involved in some wing logistic matters, but the scope of its responsibility was unclear. Colonel William C. McGraw, Jr., 1st MAW G-4, commented in mid-1970:

> Sometimes you wonder who you're supposed to go ask something. We normally would come through [FMFPac]. A couple of times we got criticized for it because it should have gone to III MAF. I'm not real clear in my mind just what functions they get into . . . . They shouldn't be worried about aircraft assignments or aircraft maintenance or supply problems or anything like this.[8]

Within the wing, each aircraft group stored and issued its own supplies and did routine maintenance and limited repair of its aircraft. Civilian teams from naval aircraft repair facilities, attached to the groups under the Special Techniques for Repair and Analysis of Aircraft Damage Program, augmented the groups' battle damage repair capabilities. The wing shipped aircraft to Japan for major rebuilding and periodic rehabilitation. Marine Wing Support Group 17 furnished Marine Corps supply, postal, disbursing, and post exchange service for all 1st MAW elements, maintained ground equipment and SATS launching and recovery systems, and conducted all shipment of aircraft into and out of Vietnam.* The wing operated the Semi-Automatic Checkout Equipment (SACE) complex at Da Nang, which diagnosed the ills of sophisticated avionics systems.[9]

The III MAF logistic system, perfected duting five years of warfare, in the main worked smoothly. Temporary shortages of 175mm ammunition, some artillery and vehicle spare parts, and radio batteries occurred; III MAF, however, quickly remedied them by borrowing from the Army or by securing emergency shipments from Marine supply facilities on Okinawa or in the United States. Many infantry battalions suffered from a chronic shortage of qualified supply officers and had difficulty obtaining prompt replacement of wornout clothing. Nevertheless, for the most part, unit commanders had few major supply worries. As Colonel Edmund G. Derning, Jr., the 7th Marines commander, put it: "The ammo flows in there . . . . You never have to think about it. POL flows in there; you never have to think about it." Indicative of the general abundance and quality of supply, the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, while operating in the Arizona Territory in February 1970, received weekly helicopter lifts of "frozen steaks, containers of milk, bread and all the onions, catsup, salt, needed for a company-size cookout every Sunday."[10]

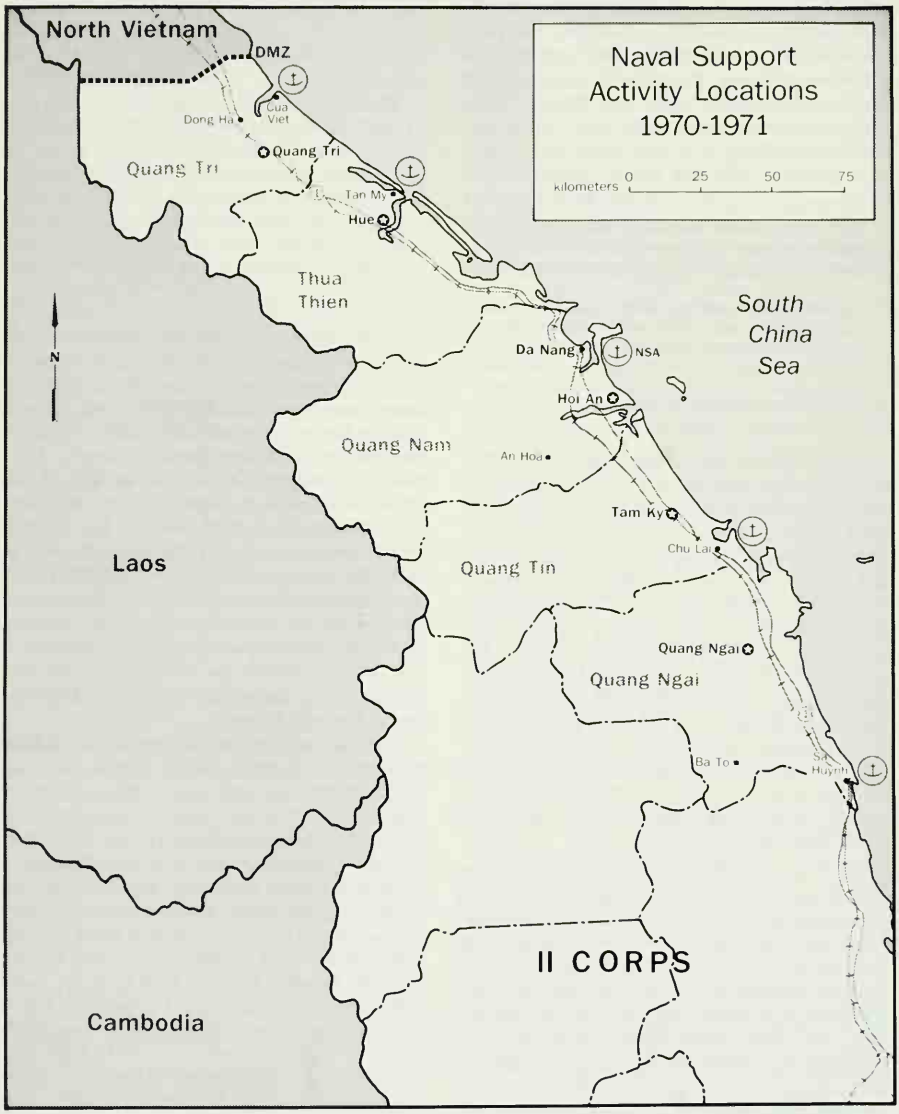
FLC Phases Down

As III MAF combat forces diminished during the various redeployments, so did Force Logistic Command and the support elements associated with it. The 1st Shore Party Battalion redeployed during February 1970, in Keystone Bluejay. It left its Company C, attached to the 1st Engineer Battalion, to continue supporting the 1st Marine Division. During February, also, the FLC deactivated its 7th Separate Bulk Fuel Company and transferred its personnel to the new Bulk Fuel Company in the Supply Battalion. In March, FLC closed the logistic support unit on Hill 55. The 1st Marines, which had moved its CP and the bulk of its forces northward to relieve the 26th Marines, now drew its supplies and maintenance support directly from FLC. Through redeployment and ordinary rotation, FLC reduced its total strength by about 2,000 Marines during Keystone Bluejay.[11]

Force Logistic Command underwent another major reduction in Keystone Robin Alpha, including redeployment of the 1st Service Battalion and deactivation of FLSG-B. In mid-May, while planning for the new redeployment was still going on, the FLSG deactivated its Supply and Maintenance companies. It transferred Marines from these companies stationed at the LSUs to the Supply and Maintenance Battalion of FLC. During July, FLC completed plans for deactivating FLSG-B and transferring control of the LSUs to Supply Battalion. FLSG-B's Truck Company ceased operations on 15 August. On 1 September, Supply Battalion assumed operational and administrative control over the logistic support units. By 15 September, all 1st Service Battalion companies had been reduced to zero strength, and on that date the battalion colors left Vietnam for Camp Pendleton

As FLSG-B prepared for deactivation, LSU-1 at An Hoa and LSU-4 at Chu Lai gradually reduced activity

*MWSG-17 redeployed to Iwakuni in July-August 1970, leaving in Vietnam its structural Fire Department, Postal, Disbursing, EOD, and Data Processing sections, among others. MWSG-17 ComdCs, Jul-Aug70.


North Vietnam
DMZ
Cua Viet
Dong Ha
Quang Tri
Quang Tri
Tan My
Hue
Thua Thien
South China Sea
Da Nang
NSA
Hoi An
Quang Nam
An Hoa
Tam Ky
Chu Lai
Laos
Quang Tin
Quang Ngai
Quang Ngai
Ba To
Sa Huynh
II CORPS
Cambodia
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Naval Support Activity Locations 1970-1971
kilometers 0 25 50 75

and transferred surplus supply stocks to Da Nang. On 2 August, anticipating the evacuation of An Hoa, FLC established a new battalion-size LSU-5 on Hill 37, initially to support 5th Marines units relocating there and later to serve the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines. The An Hoa LSU closed on 21 September. On 15 October, as the last Marines pulled out of Chu Lai, LSU-4 turned its ammunition supply point over to the U.S. Army and disbanded.[12]

During Keystone Robin Alpha, two of FLC's data processing platoons redeployed. They left behind DPP-16, with its IBM Model 360/50 computer, at FLC, and Data Processing Section 28, equipped with an older IBM 1401, at 1st MAW. These two data processing units, which combined under one roof at FLC in March 1971, continued supporting III MAF and then the 3d MAB until redeployment of the last Marine forces.[13]

Initial Keystone Robin plans had called for Force Logistic Command to reduce the strength of 1st FSR to 2,856 Marines by 15 October. FLC itself was to be deactivated by mid-December and replaced by a 2,000-man Provisional Service Battalion, Da Nang. This plan was based on the assumption that another regiment would redeploy in Keystone Robin Bravo between 15 October and 31 December, coincident with withdrawal of III MAF, 1st Division, and 1st MAW Headquarters and activation of 3d MAB. In August, after MACV exempted the Marines from Keystone Robin Bravo, III MAF revised its plans, so as to retain FLC through the remaining redeployments, with 2,800 men in the FSR plus the 1st MP Battalion and a reinforced company of force engineers—a total strength of around 3,800.

To lessen administrative manpower requirements and keep as many of its remaining Marines as possible "down at the bottom . . . kicking boxes," FLC reduced the number of companies in its Headquarters and Support, Supply, and Maintenance Battalions. Maintenance Battalion had deactivated one company in July due to a shortage of replacements. In mid-October, Headquarters and Service Battalion eliminated its Communications Company, replacing it with a platoon attached to its Support Company. Supply Battalion at the same time reduced its Bulk Fuel, Ammunition, and Ration companies each to a platoon under its Supply Company.[14]

At the conclusion of these reductions, on 23 October, Brigadier General James R. Jones replaced Brigadier General Padalino as FLC commander. Jones, a Texan and veteran of Guam and Iwo Jima, like Padalino was no stranger to III MAF logistics. During 1967-1968, Jones had commanded successively FLSG-A and FLSG-B and served as G-3 of Force Logistic Command. In September 1969, he had followed Padalino to command 3d FSR. Promoted to brigadier general on 15 August 1970, Jones again followed Padalino to FLC two months later.

FLC phased down slowly during Keystone Robin Charlie and Oriole Alpha. On 4 March 1971, as the 5th Marines redeployed, LSU-3 at LZ Baldy ceased operations. The following month, Maintenance Battalion reduced three of its companies to platoons. On 23 April, the flag of the 1st Force Service Regiment was transferred to Camp Pendleton, but the regiment's three battalions stayed at Da Nang to finish the massive job of shipping out five years of accumulated Marine Corps material.* During May and June, the FSR battalions and Company C, 1st Shore Party Battalion gradually reduced their troop strength while continuing to support the 3d MAB. The last element of the shore party company redeployed on 22 June. By the 26th, Headquarters and Service, Supply, and Maintenance Battalions, their tasks completed, had been reduced to zero strength and deactivated.

The End of Naval Support Activity Da Nang

Force Logistic Command was only one component of the United States military logistic system in I Corps. For most supplies and for a wide variety of services, III MAF depended on Naval Support Activity (NSA) Da Nang.

At the end of 1969, NSA Da Nang, commanded by Rear Admiral Robert E. Adamson, Jr., consisted of over 10,000 United States Navy personnel and employed a civilian work force of 69 Americans and over 5,800 Vietnamese. Another 123 Americans and over 4,800 Vietnamese and other Asians worked for NSA's private contractors. Originally established in 1965 to support III MAF, NSA Da Nang was under the operational control of the Commander, United States Naval Forces, Vietnam (ComNavForV). Administratively, and for budgetary purposes, it was under Commander, Service Force, Pacific Fleet.

NSA Da Nang operated the port of Da Nang, which it had substantially enlarged and improved, as well as satellite ports at Cua Viet and Tan My in northern I Corps and Sa Huynh and Chu Lai in the southern

*With the return of the 1st FSR colors to Camp Pendleton, the 5th FSR, located there, was redesignated the 1st FSR.

provinces. With a fleet of over 250 lighters and other small craft and vast warehouses, storage lots, and tank farms around Da Nang, NSA handled all incoming and outgoing military cargo. It stored and issued the rations, fuel, and other supplies used in common by United States forces. NSA's Navy Public Works Branch furnished electricity and water to American cantonments and operated the Da Nang military telephone exchange. Its civilian contractors maintained camp generators, air conditioners, and perimeter lights. NSA managed Navy and Marine real estate holdings. Its large naval hospital at Da Nang was a major component of III MAF's medical support.[15]

When United States Army forces moved into I Corps in 1967-1968, they also received logistic support from NSA Da Nang. The Army early in 1968 established U.S. Army Support Command (USASuppCom) Da Nang, to perform for its units functions roughly equivalent to those of Force Logistic Command. This organization, under the operational control of the Commander, 1st Logistical Command, U.S. Army, by late 1969 had grown to a strength of about 7,500 supply and transportation troops. It included a field depot at Da Nang and two general support groups, the 26th and the 89th, which supported Army units respectively in northern and southern I Corps.[16]

As the I Corps logistics system had evolved up to this point, the Navy through NSA Da Nang, acted as wholesale provider of commonly used supplies and service support. The Marines and Army, through FLC and USASuppCom Da Nang, distributed supplies drawn from the NSA to their own forces and procured and issued their own ammunition and those stores and equipment unique to their particular Services. FLC in addition supported the 2d ROKMC Brigade, while USASuppCom Da Nang established petroleum pipelines for use of all Services, as well as providing unserviceable property disposal and mortuary assistance. After redeployment of the 3d Marine Division and relocation of FLSG-B to Da Nang, the Army support command furnished common supply and port facilities for the Marine elements remaining in northern I Corps.*

*These units were the 5th 175mm Gun Battery; one 8-inch howitzer platoon; two medium helicopter squadrons; the 3d and 4th Combined Action Groups; a platoon of 3d Bridge Company; the 3d Force Reconnaissance Company; a 3d Marine Division SCAMP detachment; the Operations Company, 1st Radio Battalion; a detachment of MAG-16; two ASRT detachments; the 5th CIT; and the 11th ITT, a total of 2,730 Marines. FLC Fact Sheet, Subj: Logistic Support of Marines Remaining in NICTZ, dtd 18Dec69, Tab K-3, FLC ComdC, Jan70.

In May 1969, as redeployment planning began, Vice Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Commander of U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam, proposed that the missions of NSA Da Nang be assumed by the Army, which already furnished common service support for United States forces everywhere but in I Corps.* Zumwalt secured approval in principle of his plan from the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) and Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet (CinCPacFlt), with the proviso that the end of Navy common service support would occur only in conjunction with redeployment of Marine combat forces. General Abrams, ComUSMACV, also endorsed Zumwalt's proposal and in late May ordered USARV to make a preliminary study of the costs and manpower requirements of an Army logistics takeover in I Corps. USARV initially responded cautiously, noting the uncertainty of redeployment plans and recommending that for the time being the Navy continue its support mission.[17]

Lieutenant General Nickerson, the III MAF commander, when informed early in June of these preliminary steps, vehemently protested. He expressed complete satisfaction with his Navy support and urged that logistics arrangements in I Corps not be disrupted at a time when the enemy threat remained significant and major redeployments and realignments of allied combat forces were in prospect. Emotion played a large part in the initial Marine reaction. Colonel Wilbur F. Simlik, III MAF G-4, recalled: "We seemed to have a great fear of losing Navy support. NSA had done such a marvellous job for a number of years . . . . With NSA leaving, we had a great sinking feeling of despair."[18] Colonel Miller M. Blue, who became G-4 in February 1971, said years later that it was a mistake to close down NSA so early:

> This error caused a multitude of problems, especially in public works support; specifically electrical power requirements. I personally made many late night trips to the

*Since 1966, the U.S. Army's 1st Logistical Command, a subordinate command of USARV, had furnished port and transportation facilities and common item supply support for all United States forces in Vietnam outside I Corps. In I Corps, the Navy, by direction of CinCPac, had been given responsibility for both tactical and logistic operations. Under 1st Logistical Command were two major base depots at Saigon and Cam Ranh Bay and five support commands responsible for different areas, including USASuppCom Da Nang. If reinforced, a support command, such as that at Da Nang, could perform most functions of NSA Da Nang. In addition, Army engineer support could be furnished by another USARV element, U.S. Army Engineer Command, Vietnam. LtGen Joseph M. Heiser, Jr., USA, *Logistic Support*, Department of the Army Vietnam Studies (Washington: Department of the Army, 1974), pp. 9-11.

> old NSA compound to find someone in the Army to get the generators running again so we could have power in, among other places, COCs and communication centers sometimes unsuccessfully.[19]

III MAF Marines had become accustomed to working with NSA, and many relationships were rooted as much in tradition as formal Inter-Service agreement: According to Colonel Simlik:

> There were . . . many areas that were covered by the old Gunnery Sergeant to Chief routine, where a number of years ago a Gunnery Sergeant had gotten a Chief to take care of a certain function and a certain area of support, small that it may be, by seeing that he got a couple of bottles of booze or a case of beer . . . . And all of this was unwritten, of course, and passed on from Gunnery Sergeant to Gunnery Sergeant and Chief to Chief. We knew that there were great areas that we could never find out and get written down in a contract, and we had a . . . fear that the Army would not respond.[20]

In spite of III MAF reluctance, planning for the Army takeover of NSA Da Nang's functions went inexorably forward.[21] Marines still viewed the loss of services of NSA with resignation: "The termination of the logistics support role of the U.S. Navy was precipitious," recalled Colonel James A. Sloan, who served as III MAF plans officer in later 1969 and early 1970, "and was so as the result of the determination of Vice Admiral Zumwalt. The feeling I had was that the Navy was deploying on a schedule, that 'Vietnamization' was reality and those forces remaining had best be preprared to fill the vacuum."[22]

In September 1969, at Zumwalt's suggestion, MACV established a joint Army-Navy planning group, located at Da Nang, to work out the practical details of gradually shifting common service support over to the Army as the Marines pulled out. The group, chaired by the Army, included representatives of MACV, USARV, NavForV, III MAF, 1st Logistical Command, NSA Da Nang, Army Support Command Da Nang, and Force Logistic Command. Divided into subcommittees on specific logistic functions,* the group worked through October determining requirements for personnel, equipment, and funds, defining problems, and proposing solutions.

On 15 November, with both joint studies and Marine redeployments well under way, General Abrams instructed the Service components to develop a support turnover schedule for presentation to MACV by 1 January 1970. Abrams directed that the final Army assumption of common support would follow the redeployment of Marine combat units, but that particular functions not required for sustenance of III MAF should be transferred earlier whenever possible, subject to the concurrence of III MAF.

Another month and a half of planning and inter-Service negotiation followed Abram's order. NavForV pressed for early Army takeover of ports and activities no longer needed by the Marines in northern I Corps. NavForV also indicated that after the Army assumption of common support, it would disestablish NSA Da Nang and replace it with a smaller Naval Support Facility primarily concerned with small-craft maintenance and assisting the South Vietnamese Navy. III MAF emphasized the need to move slowly and carefully in transferring any functions to the Army and reiterated that most Navy common support should continue until all Marine combat forces had left Vietnam. USARV sought the loan or transfer of Navy facilities and equipment to supplement Army logistic resources in I Corps. The Army and Navy also tried to work out terms for renegotiating and, if necessary, prorating payment for the various civilian support contracts. Each Service anticipated a reduced budget in the new fiscal year, and each was trying to minimize the cost to itself of supporting the forces in I Corps. How large those forces would be remained an unanswered question throughout most of the planning. The logisticians did not have access to the highly classified projections of future troop redeployments.

Discussions dragged on past the MACV 1 January deadline. On 21 January, General Abrams instructed the Services to submit a plan by 5 February, based on guidelines laid down by him. Abrams set 1 July 1970 as the date for final turnover of common service support in I Corps to the Army. This was the beginning of the new fiscal year, and change at that point would simplify funding and the negotiation of new support contracts. The changeover was to occur on 1 July even if Marine combat forces remained. USARV in that case would furnish whatever common support the Marines required. The Army was to take over as many I Corps common support functions as possible before the deadline, while the Navy was to transfer or loan to USARV any equipment the Army needed to assume the support mission. In response to this directive, the component commands quickly completed a timeta-

*The subcomittees were: Facilities Engineering, Construction, Communications, Medical, Ammunition, Inter-Service Support Agreements, Transportation, Petroleum, Contracts, Class I, Property Disposal, Civilian Personnel, Security, Finance, Supply, Maintenance, and Aviation.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373371

A Marine from the 7th Engineer Battalion hoses down a bulldozer as the unit prepares its heavy equipment for reembarkation to Okinawa in August 1970.

ble calling for a gradual transfer of functions, to begin in northern I Corps during February. Both NSA Da Nang and US Army Support Command Da Nang now developed detailed plans for their own roles in the changeover.

Preliminary turnovers of equipment and a few facilities in northern I Corps had begun in November and December 1969. On 15 February 1970, Naval Support Activity Da Nang disbanded its detachments at Sa Huynh and Cua Viet; elements of USASuppCom Da Nang took over operation of both ports. A month later, the NSA detachment at Tan My, near Hue, ceased operations. Its function, as well as other supply and support activities at Hue and Phu Bai, were assumed by the Army support command. At Da Nang during March, NSA's public works division turned over operation of the telephone system, as well as some cargo handling functions. The NSA hospital began reducing nonessential activities in preparation for deactivation. On 26 March, the Army took over all fuel storage and issue operations at Da Nang and Chu Lai. During April, NSA Da Nang transferred its public works maintenance shops at Phu Bai and Tan My to the Army's facilities maintenance contractor.[23]

In early May, III MAF asked MACV to halt further scheduled turnover actions until the entire timetable could be reviewed in the light of changed redeployment plans. Common service support turnover planning had been predicated on another redeployment closely following Keystone Bluejay and on both these redeployments being "Marine-heavy," but Marine participation in Bluejay had been reduced and the subsequent withdrawal now would not begin until mid-summer. This meant that larger Marine combat forces would be left after 1 July than originally expected. III MAF questioned whether USARV, with its own resources diminished by redeployment, could support adequately this larger Marine force and suggested that the Navy slow down the transfer of logistic responsibilities until more Marines had left.

MACV in response called a common service support conference, which met at Saigon from 15 to 17 May. At the conference, NavForV insisted that facilities transfers, contract negotiations, and budget planning had gone too far to permit any postponement of the turnover beyond 1 July. USARV declared that it could furnish the Marines all the support they now received from NSA, but it became apparent in the discussions that the Army authorities did not yet comprehend the extent and variety of those services. MACV directed that the 1 July turnover deadline be met and instructed the Services to finish working out methods. During May and June, representatives of III MAF, USA Support Command Da Nang, and Force Logistic Command met frequently to coordinate a smooth transfer and draw up interservice support agreements detailing exactly what supplies and services the Army would furnish to III MAF. By 28 June, III MAF and USARV had approved these agreements.[24]

Meanwhile, the turnover continued. The NSA Da Nang Hospital closed on 15 May, and step by step the Navy handed over its Da Nang public works functions and port facilities to the Army Support Command. USARV reinforced the Da Nang support command with 2,000 additional officers and men, drawn from elsewhere in Vietnam. The reinforcements included the 1,000-man 5th Transportation Command,* which moved to Da Nang from Qui Nhon in late May and early June and occupied the former NSA Hospital complex. On 1 June, NSA disestablished its detachment at Chu Lai. By the 30th, it had transferred or

*This command consisted of terminal service, POL barge, tug, and small boat companies and detachments. The unit took over many of NSA Da Nang's harbor craft.

terminated all its remaining functions and activities at Da Nang. NSA Da Nang was deactivated on the 30th; the following day, its successor organization, Naval Support Facility Da Nang, was commissioned, with headquarters at Camp Tien Sha in East Da Nang. That same day, 1 July, the Army-Marine interservice support agreements went into effect. In a separate action on the 1st, III MAF turned its Transient Facility and R&R Processing Center over to Army management.[25]

As the USASuppCom Da Nang assumed most of NSA Da Nang's support functions, III MAF and USARV worked out plans for the Army to furnish ammunition to Marine ground units. Negotiations on this subject began early in 1970, but the Marine Corps decided to delay the ammunition turnover past 1 July, until nearer the time of the final Marine withdrawals. Under the plan, Force Logistic Command eventually was to hand over its three ammunition supply points (ASPs) and most of their stocks to the Army, which would issue ammunition to Marine units as required. On 12 October, III MAF transferred control of its ASP-3 at Chu Lai to the Army. During December, III MAF and USARV established 15 March 1971 as the date when the Army would assume complete responsibility for issuing ammunition to Marine ground forces, under an interservice support agreement. Gradually, III MAF shipped excess stocks of Marine-peculiar ammunition out of Vietnam and transferred the rest to the U.S. Army and ARVN. The Marines shifted aviation munitions from the ASPs to the MAG-11 and MAG-16 bomb dumps. On 15 March 1971, control of ASP-2, the principal ground ammunition storage facility near Da Nang, passed to U.S. Army Support Command Da Nang, as did custody of 6,800 tons of munitions. Two months later, the Marines handed ASP-1, their remaining Da Nang area ammunition facility, over to the South Vietnamese, who had been using a portion of it for storage of their own ammunition since early 1970.[26]

The shift of common service support of III MAF from NSA Da Nang to the U.S. Army Support Command Da Nang was attended by a variety of problems. At the outset, the Army was short of small-boat pilots and crewmen for port operations; the Da Nang support command had to borrow Navy personnel and hire civilian workers for this purpose. Marines found Army logistic organization fragmented and confusing. XXIV Corps had little role in logistic matters, forcing III MAF to deal with USASuppCom Da Nang, 1st Logistical Command, and separate engineer and other technical commands. Disagreements arose over interpretation of the interservice agreements, many resulting from belated discovery of informal arrangements that had not been covered. Most important, U.S. Army Support Command Da Nang, like other Army elements, labored under a sharply reduced FY 1971 budget and simply could not afford the quantity and variety of supplies to which the Marines had been accustomed.[27]

The turnover of logistic support to the Army had especially disruptive effects on the maintenance of III MAF camps and facilities. Developed piecemeal over the years from what were initially expected to be temporary installations, these facilities required continuous and extensive repair and rebuilding. Navy-installed generators, air conditioners, water and sewage pumps, and other pieces of equipment by mid-1970 were old and nearly worn out. The Army support command did not stock spare parts for many of these items. NSA Da Nang had turned over its own spares, but these stocks had run low as NSA closed down. Inevitably, equipment breakdowns and long delays in repairs plagued the Marines. To make matters worse, USASuppCom Da Nang and the Army Engineers were short of technicians and equipment for repair of such vital items as perimeter lights. The international work force of Philco-Ford the Army's civilian facilities maintenance contractor, further complicated operations. Lieutenant Colonel William R. Fails, S-4 of MAG-16 and facilities manager for Marble Mountain Air Facility, recalled: "There was an American company using Taiwanese supervisors for Korean assistant supervisors, to work with the Vietnamese . . . . [All these nationalities] . . . working with Vietnamese under an Army command, supporting a U.S. Marine Corps unit that normally gets its support from the Navy, just became a nightmare . . . ."[28]

All the commands concerned labored diligently to solve or at least alleviate facilities problems. USASuppCom Da Nang, Philco-Ford, and the Army Engineers furnished all the assistance they could. Marine commands supplemented these efforts by self-help, occasionally resorting to unorthodox methods to obtain needed material. When the Navy public works warehouse at Da Nang closed down, Lieutenant Colonel Fails "found out that some of the equipment they had . . . would be available to any U.S. military unit that wanted it and would sign for it." Fails and the MAG-16 staff acted quickly:

> The next morning, with the concurrence . . . of the group commander, . . . we launched out every flat-bed . . . we could lay our hands on, with some of the Marine Corps' finest scavengers. We flew over an advance party by helicopter and made literally a pre-dawn assault on the warehouses . . . We had clerks with us . . . . We needed everything . . . We started a shifting, rotating convoy, and I think we got 40-some truckloads . . . of stuff out of there . . . . We were able to take that material and upgrade our facilities considerably.[29]

In spite of many difficulties, the Army support command succeeded in sustaining III MAF during a period of diminishing Marine strength and low-intensity combat. III MAF developed a generally harmonious working relationship with the Army command. According to Colonel Simlik, the III MAF G-4, the "people in the Army who were involved in the transfer were people we knew personally and had the greatest confidence in." Brigadier General Leo J. Dulacki, III MAF Chief of Staff, summed up the predominant Marine evaluation of Army support: "The Army logistical command performed well and did not leave III MAF wanting."[30]

Engineer Support

At the beginning of 1970, three Marine engineer battalions were deployed in I Corps. The 1st Engineer Battalion, organic engineer unit of the 1st Marine Division,* reinforced by Company A (-), 5th Engineer Battalion, performed light construction throughout the division TAOR, maintained water points, swept sections of highway for mines, and conducted the 1st Marine Division Land Mine Warfare School.** Of III MAF's two force engineer battalions, the 7th, with the 1st Bridge Company attached, did heavy construction in the Da Nang area, maintained and improved highways, and made clearing mine sweeps. The 9th Engineer Battalion, with its CP and three companies at Chu Lai and part of the fourth company at Tam Ky, concentrated most of its efforts on clearing mines from Route 1 between Chu Lai and the Ba Ren River and preparing the roadbed for paving. This battalion also included a provisional land clearing company and provided construction and other support to the Americal Division.*

In addition to these Marine engineer units, the four-battalion 45th U.S. Army Engineer Group and four U.S. Navy Mobile Construction (Seabee) Battalions were operating in I Corps at the beginning of 1970. Until 9 March, III MAF, as senior United States command in the corps area, supervised the entire engineering effort. After that date, XXIV Corps assumed this responsibility. III MAF retained operational control of its two force engineer battalions, which were under administrative control of the 1st Marine Division. The division had both operational and administrative control of the 1st Engineer Battalion. With Marine, Army, and Navy elements all involved in large projects, engineer coordination in I Corps was a complex task. Colonel Nicholas A. Canzona, the 1st Marine Division G-4, commented: "I never saw so many engineers in all my life working in a given area, and . . . I don't think I've ever seen so much attention and confusion as to who is supposed to do what and why."[31]

During 1970, redeployments drastically reduced Marine engineer strength. Company A (-), 5th Engineer Battalion and Company A, 9th Engineer Battalion left Vietnam in Keystone Bluejay. In late March 1970, the 9th Engineer Battalion moved its CP to the Da Nang area and located its three remaining engineer companies at Tam Ky, Hill 34, and LZ Baldy. The battalion relinquished its minesweeping and construction mission on Route 1 south of Tam Ky while continuing to work on and sweep the highway from Tam Ky north to Baldy. On 19 July, as part of Keystone Robin Alpha, the 7th Engineer Battalion, with the exception of its Company A, and the 9th Engineer Battalion stood down. Even during their stand-down period, the engineers were kept busy: "As combat engineer platoons were freed from their supporting role when their infantry battalions stood down, they immediately went to work on dismantling pre-engineered buildings in the FLC compound for shipment to Okinawa," recalled Major James G. Dixon, who commanded Company A, 1st Engineer Battalion from February to June 1971. He noted, "A late engineer project for one combat engineer platoon newly out of the field was installation of a security fence around the USAID com-

*A division engineer battalion normally consists of 769 officers and men in a headquarters company, an engineer support company, and three engineer companies. Its primary mission is close combat engineer support of the division, and it is organized to provide one company in direct support of each infantry regiment, hence the battalion is equipped for light, temporary construction.

**For details of operations of the Land Mine Warfare School, see Chapter 14.

*A force engineer battalion, of 1,115 officers and men in a headquarters company, a service company, and four engineer companies, is equipped for larger and more permanent construction tasks than is the division engineer battalion.

pound in downtown Da Nang, a drastic change of environment for these versatile engineers."[32]

The 7th and 9th Engineer Battalions embarked for the United States in September. Company A, 7th Engineer Battalion, which had been reinforced to almost 300 officers and men, was placed under administrative control of FLC and attached to Maintenance Battalion. Under III MAF operational control, the company assumed on a reduced scale the missions of its parent battalion.[33] During February and March 1971, the 1st Engineer Battalion redeployed in Keystone Robin Charlie, leaving its Company A, with Company A, 7th Engineers, as engineer element of the 3d MAB. Major Dixon, who redeployed with the last engineer companies in June 1971, later observed that during the final stages of redeployment "the demand for engineer support was overwhelming . . . and continued to exceed resources through the last engineer unit's departure . . . ."[34]

As long as they remained in Vietnam, all three Marine engineer battalions expended much effort and material in roadbuilding and repair. Their activities were part of a general allied program to create a passable road net throughout I Corps, both to promote economic development and to facilitate ARVN maneuver, especially after the Americans and their helicopters had departed. The Marines concentrated on Route 4, running east to west from Hoi An to Thuong Duc, and the unpaved stretch of Route 1 between the Ba Ren River and Baldy. During April 1970, elements of the 1st Engineer Battalion widened Route 4 between Hill 52 and Thuong Duc into a two-lane fair-weather road. Between 26 April and 24 July, the 7th Engineer Battalion improved a six-mile segment of the same route east of Hill 37 into an all-weather, though unpaved, highway. Working on this heavily-mined stretch, the Marine engineers lost two men killed, 29 wounded, and had eight pieces of machinery destroyed. Elements of the battalion labored past their 19 July stand-down date to finish the job. By early 1971, the 1st Engineer Battalion, in cooperation with the Seabees, had paved the 12 miles of Route 4 between Route 1 and Dai Loc. On Route 1 itself, Marine engineers hauled rock and dirt and helped with grading in preparation for paving of the road by the Seabees. The Quang Nam floods of October-November 1970, which submerged most roads and bridges under five feet or more of water, proved the worth of the engineers' efforts. Most bridges and surfaced highways in the province emerged with only minor damage, and Marines and Seabees soon had the major routes open again for traffic.[35]

All three engineer battalions regularly swept assigned segments of highway for buried mines. Sweep teams employed electric mine detectors and also bought large amounts of ordnance from Vietnamese civilians under the Voluntary Informant Program.* During July 1970, for example, 17 teams from the 1st Engineer Battalion swept over 1,550 miles of road. They detected and destroyed 10 buried mines and purchased 78 ordnance items, ranging from American and Communist grenades to 105mm artillery rounds.[36]

In accord with allied Vietnamization policy, Marine engineers during March 1970 began training minesweep teams for Quang Nam Province and Quang Da Special Zone. The 1st Engineer Battalion mine warefare school established a special two-day course for ARVN and Regional Force soldiers and dispatched a contact team to various Vietnamese commands. By the end of May, 176 Vietnamese had graduated from the course and 316 had received instruction from the mobile team. During June, the 1st Marine Division, Quang Nam Province, and QDSZ agreed on a timetable for Vietnamese takeover of particular highway segments. Actual turnover of responsibility fell behind schedule due to shortages of equipment and Vietnamese procrastination, but gradually, as Marine engineers redeployed, the South Vietnamese began sweeping longer and longer stretches of road. They continued to rely heavily on the Americans for advice and equipment maintenance.[37]

Throughout the war, the enemy had benefited from a network of caves, tunnels, and fortifications, burrowed out during many years, that honeycombed Viet Cong strongholds such as the area south of Da Nang. To destroy these fighting positions and escape routes, as well as remove concealing foliage, Marine engineers engaged in "land-clearing," systematically bulldozing bare selected portions of countryside. For this purpose, III MAF and XXIV Corps had organized the 2d Provisional Clearing Company. The company consisted of a command group from the 9th Engineer Battalion with men and equipment from both force engineer battalions and from the 26th and 39th U.S. Army Engineer Battalions.

Land-clearing operations followed an established pattern. GVN authorities designed the target areas, and the military unit in the TAOR of which the oper-

*For details on this program, see Chapter 14.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A800395

Marine PFC Kyle E. Pruitt mans his .50-caliber machine gun during a Marine "Rough Rider" supply convoy. The Marines placed armored plates and mounted machine guns on trucks to protect the convoy from enemy ambushes. Note the improvised seat.

ation would take place furnished normally a company-size security force. The land-clearing unit then established a base camp, and its bulldozers began scraping the assigned area section by section. As they cleared trees and brush, the heavy tractors caved in most trenches, tunnels, and bunkers and detonated or uncovered boobytraps. Engineers blew up any ordnance not exploded by the tractors, as well as tunnels and bunkers too deep or strong for the bulldozers to demolish.

During the first part of 1970, the Land Clearing Company worked mostly in the area southeast of Hoi An. Between 19 March and 25 May, it cleared 11,345 acres, obliterated 1,483 bunkers, filled in 5,000 yards of trenches, crushed 118 yards of tunnels, and uncovered 526 pieces of ordnance. On 27 May, with redeployment of the Marine engineer battalions imminent, XXIV Corps disbanded the 2d Provisional Land Clearing Company. From then until redeployment, the remaining Marine engineers participated in occasional land-clearing operations. They also helped prepare previously cleared ground, for example on Go Noi Island, for cultivation by resettled refugees.[38] Major Dixon remembered the effects of the often hazardous work of the remaining engineers performed on Go Noi during April and May of 1971: "Harassed by detonation of unexploded ordnance caused by harrow blades, the engineers resolutely operated their equipment over countless acres of arable land creating a source of livelihood and sustenance to the resettlement hamlets located nearby."[39]

In areas not being farmed, jungle vegetation soon returned, but the Viet Cong could not quickly rebuild their tunnels and fortifications. Colonel Wilcox, the 1st Marines commander during the first part of 1970, reported that land-clearing "really helped our situation below Da Nang." It restricted enemy movment and "gave them no place to stage for their attacks."[40]

Although III MAF was decreasing in size, the engineers still faced seemingly endless requirements for camp and firebase construction and rehabilitation. Elements of all three engineer battalions each month built or rebuilt bunkers, watch towers, barbed wire entanglements, huts, showers, and latrines. They installed or improved electric and water systems. For the 1st MAW during 1970, the engineers constructed 170

steel and concrete "Wonderarch"* shelters at Da Nang Airbase and Marble Mountain, to protect aircraft against rocket and mortar fire. In the field, engineers, lifted into positions by helicopter with minidozers and other equipment, constructed fire support bases for both ARVN and Marine operations.[41]

As Marines withdrew from Vietnam, the engineers demolished the installations they had built earlier. During September and October 1970, elements of the 1st Engineer Battalion, assisted by heavy equipment operators from Company A, 7th Engineer Battalion, leveled much of An Hoa Combat Base. Using an average of 127 men and 20 pieces of earthmoving equipment per day, the engineers dismantled or demolished 340 buildings and flarrened fortifications, leaving intact only the airfield, the industrial complex, and the small portion of the facility to be occupied by the ARVN.[42]

Base demolition accelerated during early 1971. During February, engineers from Company C, 1st Engineer Battalion, with helilifted bulldozers, destroyed OP Roundup and FSB Ryder in the Que Sons. Ironically, the 1st Engineer Battalion had finished rehabilitating huts and fortifications at Ryder only the previous September. In March and April, following the sequence of Marine relinquishment of territory, the engineers leveled camps, firebases, and OPs nearer Da Nang. For each position to be demolished, Lieutenant Colonel Daryl E. Benstead, 1st Engineer Battalion commander, or a member of his staff, first reconnoitered the site with representatives of the occupying unit and prepared a destruction schedule and plan. After division review and approval of the plan, engineers, usually brought in with their equipment by helicopter, would strip the position of all useable material and then bulldoze the fortifications.[43] Major Dixon later described this process, known then as "demilitarization:"

> De-militarization became a well used term at those bases not retained by either U.S. Army or Vietnamese forces, and where total destruction exceeded resources. The engineers would destroy command and perimeter bunkers and any other facility that could be used as a shelter for incoming fire, thus preventing their use by the VC.[44]

The local Vietnamese would then pick the cantonment clean, usually leaving nothing bur a bare hilltop.

The engineers were hard pressed during the final months of redeployment to accomplish all the tasks necessary before the MAB departed Vietnam. They operated water points and leveled numerous camps, firebases, OPs, and IOD sites near Da Nang, as well as on remote hilltops. In addition, they provided combat engineer support to the 1st Marines, the last infantry regiment in Vietnam. The support given by Company A, 1st Engineer Battalion and by its sister unit, Company A, 7th Engineer Battalion, which was commanded during the period by Major Gilbert R. Meibaum, "was substantial, mission essential for the Brigade and closely and harmoniously coordinated by the Brigade Engineer Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Benstead."[45]

Motor Transport

At the beginning of 1970, III MAF included four motor transport units. The 1st Motor Transport Battalion, reinforced by Company A, 5th Motor Transport Battalion, was under operational control of the 1st Marine Division, as was the 11th Motor Transport Battalion, a force troops unit.* These battalions furnished tactical and logistical transportarion for rhe division. Force Logistic Command had operational control of the large Truck Company of the Headquarters and Service Battalion, 1st FSR, and the 7th Motor Transport Battalion, another force troops unit newly

*Introduced late in 1969, "Wonderarches" were constructed of bolted steel sections covered with 12 inches of high-strength concrete. Each semi-cylindrical structure was 48 feet wide by 70 feet long and housed one aircraft. Besides protecting the planes from high-trajectory fire, the shelters were designed to reduce the danger of a fire and explosion in one aircraft spreading to others. FMFPac, MarOps, Dec69, p. 80.

*The 1st Motor Transport Battalion was an organic element of the 1st Marine Division and consisted of a headquarters and service company and three truck companies. Each truck company was normally equipped with 30 2½-ton cargo trucks and with 1½-ton cargo trailers for use by supported units. Each truck company was also equipped with maintenance, recovery, and refueling vehicles. The 7th and 11th Motor Transport Battalions were elements of Force Troops and were assigned the mission of reinforcing the land transport of MAF elements for tactical, logistic, and administrative movement of troops, supplies, and equipment. Each of the force motor transport battalions consisted of a headquarters and service company, three truck companies and a transportation company. The truck companies were equipped with 31 5-ton cargo trucks, and the transportation company had 30 tractor prime movers, 45 high bed trailers, and 2 25-ton, low bed trailers. LtCol Morris S. Shimanoff, Comments on draft ms, 9May83 Vietnam Comment File.

moved to Da Nang from Quang Tri. Both of these organizations supported FLC, as well as other III MAF elements. Truck Company, which had a variety of specialized vehicles as well as a fleet of 2.5- and 5-ton trucks, coordinated the "Rough Rider" convoys to bases in southern Quang Nam, such as Baldy, and furnished gun trucks* for escort.

Most motor transport units redeployed late. Company A, 5th Motor Transport Battalion, which had been supporting the 26th Marines, and the 7th Motor Transport Battalion left in Keystone Bluejay; but only Company C, 1st Motor Transport Battalion, redeployed in Keystone Robin Alpha. In Keystone Robin Charlie, the H&S Company and Company B, 1st Motor Transport Battalion and the entire 11th Motor Transport Battalion redeployed. Company A, 1st Motor Transport Battalion and the FLC Truck Company remained behind in support of 3d MAB, standing down respectively for redeployment and deactivation in mid-June 1971.

In spite of the extensive tactical and logistic use of helicopters, III MAF still relied heavily on trucks for cargo movement. The logistic support units and major bases received most of their stocks by road convoy. During 1970, accordingly, the Marine motor transport battalions drove over 3,000,000 miles, hauling 566,646 tons of freight and 1,297,533 passengers. Over improved and increasingly secure highways, trucks now could reach most Marine positions in Quang Nam. Daily resupply convoys ran to Hill 37, An Hoa, Baldy, and other bases, although for safety from mines, most troops bound for outlying areas still went by helicopter.[46]

Viet Cong mines remained a significant threat to Marine truckets, in spite of generally improved security and constant minesweeping. The stretch of Route 4 east of Hill 37, part of the land supply line to that position, was especially dangerous. In an effort to reduce personnel casualties from detonations, the Marines since early in the war had attached sandbags and pieces of boiler plate to cabs and other vital areas of their vehicles; but this improvised armor could not stop most of the fragments that caused the severest injuries and its weight reduced truck efficiency and carrying capacity.

During 1968, at III MAF request, the Marine Corps had begun developing light, easily attached and removed armor kits for 2.5- and 5-ton trucks. By mid-1970, these kits had been designed, tested, and manufactured. Separate cab and bed components could be installed in a few hours without special tools or modification of the vehicle. Made of 5/8-inch wrought armor steel, the plates weighed about half as much per square foot as sandbags and could stop fragments of the most powerful mines. During September, delivery of the kits began to the 1st and 11th Motor Transport Battalions. By the end of the year, the 1st Battalion had installed 62 cabs and 19 bed kits in its 2.5-ton trucks and cab kits in two wreckers and two tankers. The 11th Battalion had armored the cabs of 82 of its 5-ton trucks and the beds of eight.[47]

The kits quickly proved their worth. On 4 November 1970, a 1st Motor Transport Battalion truck, serving as command vehicle of a convoy with both cab and bed kits installed, hit a 30-pound mine on Route 4 about a mile east of Hill 37. The explosion tore the truck in half, but all four Marines on board survived. Although all were injured by being hurled from the vehicle, none of the Marines suffered fragment wounds or loss of limb. The armor kits were recovered with only minor damage and later installed in other trucks.[48] In similar incidents during the following weeks, truck armor repeatedly saved Marine lives. Force Logistic Command, which initially had not ordered armor for its trucks, made haste to do so. By early 1971, Truck Company was installing kits in its vehicles.[49]

Medical Services

At the beginning of 1970, III MAF included the 1st Medical Battalion, reinforced by Company A, 5th Medical Battalion, which maintained a 300-bed 1st Marine Division hospital. The 1st Hospital Company, a force troops unit, which had operated a 100-bed treatment facility, was preparing to stand down for redeployment. About 100 Navy medical officers, 2,300 medical service corpsmen, and 1,781 hospital corpsmen were attached to division, wing, FLC, and Combined Action Force units. Two Navy hospital ships, the USS *Repose* (AH 16) and the USS *Sanctuary* (AH 17), each with a capacity of about 800 patients, were on station off I Corps to treat the more seriously wounded and sick. At Da Nang, the 600-bed Naval Support Activity Hospital afforded most of the services of a

*Gun trucks were the standard 2½-ton or 5-ton trucks with the cargo beds armored on the sides with steel plating and the floors covered with sandbags. Each truck mounted a .50-caliber machine gun and was equipped with a radio for convoy control, adjustment of supporting arms, and calls for medical evacuation. These trucks also carried tools and vehicle spare parts.

general hospital in the United States, including a full surgical capability, preventive medicine and medical research units, a blood bank, and an optical shop. When necessary, III MAF could use facilities of the 95th U S. Army Evacuation Hospital at Da Nang.[50]

While the Naval Support Activity Hospital afforded MAF units basic medical care, the 1st and 11th Dental Companies provided a broad range of dental services to units of III MAF from 1970-1971. The 1st Company, which numbered 26 Naval officers and 40 enlisted men in March 1970, operated 15 dental facilities for the 1st Marine Division in the Da Nang TAOR, including permanent clinics at the 1st Division command post at Da Nang, 5th Marines Headquarters at An Hoa, 7th Marines Headquarters at LZ Baldy, and 3d Battalion, 5th Marines Headquarters at Hill 65, as well as operating mobile surgical vans capable of supporting units along the major roads throughout the TAOR. The 11th Dental Company, slightly smaller than the 1st, serviced the wing, FLC, and III MAF Headquarters until September 1970, when 1st Dental Company redeployed, and then provided support for all Marine units remaining until 28 May 1971, when the final detachment of the 11th Company redeployed. Captain Meredith H. Mead, DC, USN, who assumed command of the 1st Dental Company in March 1970, recalled the support which the dental companies provided:

> All these clinics had from one or more dentists and dental techs depending on the number of personnel to be served . . . . All had high speed handpieces powered by a gasoline air compressor. This was the latest in field dental equipment. Many of the dental chairs were not field type but were old chairs sent from the States. The 1st Dental Company had a trailer fitted out as a mobile dental office to rotate among those people in more remote locations . . . . [The 11th Dental Company] had a very good modern prosthetic laboratory for fabrication of dentures. It included an automatic casting machine that was used to make partial dentures from [a] chromium cobalt alloy. It was better than many laboratories in the States.[51]

During 1969, III MAF and XXIV Corps had established a joint medical regulating center by placing a Navy-Marine regulating section with its Army counterpart at the 95th Evacuation Hospital. As helicopters picked up casualties throughout I Corps, the pilots would contact the regulating center on a dedicated radio frequency and report the number of patients and the type and severity of the wounds or illness. The regulator then checked a status board showing the facilities, specialists, and space available at each hospital, directed the helicopter to the appropriate destination, and notified the hospital that casualties were on the way. On 10 April 1970, after XXIV Corps became the senior U.S. command in I Corps, the Marines and Navy deactivated their portion of the joint regulating unit. The U.S. Army 67th Medical Group then took over medical regulation for all of I Corps, including III MAF.[52]

Admissions to the hospitals serving III MAF reflected the declining level of combat. Of 16,821 patients treated during 1970, 21 percent were battle casualties. By comparison, in 1969, out of 22,003 hospital patients, 26 per cent had been wounded in combat; and in 1967, a year of heavy fighting, combat wounded had accounted for 39 per cent of 23,091 admissions.[53]

During 1970, redeployments and deactivations rapidly reduced III MAF's medical support facilities. The 1st Hospital Company left Vietnam on 27 February in Keystone Bluejay, followed on 12 March by Company A, 5th Medical Battalion. On 13 March, the *Repose*, which had been on duty in Vietnamese waters since February 1966, sailed for the United States and deactivation.[54]

For Marines, the most dramatic medical support reduction was the closing on 15 May of the NSA Da Nang Hospital. More than any other aspect of the NSA phasedown, this action aroused concern among III MAF commanders that the Marines would be left without adequate facilities, especially if the intensity of combat should increase during the summer. In the face of III MAF requests for postponement of the closing, ComNavForV remained adamant while at the same time assuring the Marines that the Navy in emergencies would furnish all necessary support. Through FMFPac, III MAF appealed to CinCPacFlt and CinCPac, again to no avail. III MAF finally approached ComUSMACV. General Abrams upheld the Navy's decision on the closing date, but, as General Dulacki recalled, "he gave his full and personal assurances that in the event the situation required, the Marines would be provided full medical support even if it meant moving an Army hospital into ICTZ."[55]

The NSA Hospital closed on schedule, leaving III MAF with the facilities of the 1st Medical Battalion and the USS *Sanctuary*, backed by the Army 95th Evacuation Hospital. As battlefield action remained limited in scale and intensity, this medical support proved more than adequate. During September, in Keystone Robin Alpha, Company C, 1st Medical Bat-

talion redeployed. The rest of the battalion, except for Company A, redeployed in April 1971 in Keystone Robin Charlie. Company A remained the principal medical element of 3d MAB. The *Sanctuary* left for the United States on 1 May. Company A stood down on 2 June and redeployed on the 25th.[56]

CHAPTER 19

The Logistics of Redeployment

The 'Mixmaster' of Personnel—'Mixmastering' of Equipment and Real Estate

The 'Mixmaster' of Personnel

The most complex logistic problem facing III MAF throughout 1970-1971 was the redeployment of men and equipment. Redeployment was not simply a matter of the whole force ceasing operations, packing up, and leaving Vietnam. Instead, in each withdrawal, selected units or parts of units had to be extricated from continuing active operations. The departing units had to exchange most of their personnel and much of their equipment with other organizations still in combat before embarking by sea and air for destinations in the Pacific or the United States. Colonel Hershel L. Johnson, Jr., who assumed command of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines in August 1970, later explained: ". . . the many problems of accountability and the necessary preparation for turnover of equipment to other units was a task which would have been difficult under the best of circumstances. The requirement to transfer critical personnel, many of whom could assist in accountability problems, was understandable, but served to aggravate the situations."[1]

At the same time, portions of Force Logistic Command's large reserve material stocks had to be disposed of either by shipment out of Vietnam or by transfer to other United States or Vietnamese Armed Services. The traffic was not all one way. Normal rotations of personnel and restockage and replacement of equipment had to continue, but the flow through the manpower and materiel "pipelines" had to be regulated so as to leave III MAF at the prescribed reduced strength at the end of each redeployment increment. Due to the length of time involved in moving men and supplies through the pipeline, achievement of the proper level at any point required almost impossibly precise calculation and operational coordination.

For each redeployment, the White House and Defense Department, in consultation with MACV, determined the number of troops to be withdrawn and the beginning and concluding dates of the withdrawal. MACV, in turn, apportioned the troops to be removed among the Services and received from the component commanders a list of specific units to be redeployed. CinCPac and the Joint Chiefs of Staff reviewed and approved the troop list and determined the destinations of the units leaving Vietnam. The particular Services established personnel policies for each withdrawal and developed their own plans and transportation requirements for movement of men and supplies. Finally, CinCPac, on the basis of information provided by the Services, would prepare a tentative schedule for sea and air movements. At a final CinCPac movement conference, representatives of all concerned commands would apportion aircraft and shipping and establish a definite timetable for the withdrawal.[2]

FMFPac, headquartered at Camp Smith, Hawaii, was the central Marine Corps coordinator of redeployment planning and execution. FMFPac, at the direction of HQMC, represented the Marine Corps in consultations with other Pacific commands. In conjunction with III MAF, it suggested Marine units for redeployment. It transmitted manpower and logistic guidance to III MAF and coordinated movement of men and equipment from South Vietnam to other Marine bases in the Pacific and the continental United States.[3] Until July 1970, Lieutenant General Henry W. Buse, Jr., a Naval Academy graduate and winner of the Silver Star in World War II, commanded FMFPac. Buse's replacement, Lieutenant General William K. Jones, also a World War II veteran who had earned a Silver Star Medal at Tarawa and a Navy Cross at Saipan, had had first-hand experience with redeployment. As commander of the 3d Marine Division during 1969, Jones had conducted its relocation from northern I Corps to Okinawa.

According to Colonel Simlik, the III MAF G-4, the relationship between FMFPac and III MAF on redeployment matters was "constant and close and personal."[4] Both Buse and Jones made frequent trips to Da Nang for observation and consultation. At the same time, both FMFPac commanders maintained a close and friendly working relationship with Admiral John S. McCain, Jr., CinCPac. General Jones recalled that McCain:

> . . . thought highly of my precedessor, General Buse, whom he used as a close friend and confidant and he complimented me by taking me in under the same ground rules.

> We had a special phone that was a dedicated phone from him to CGFMFPac and that phone rang quite regularly . . . He included CGFMFPac in everything and treated him as a component commander, although of course he wasn't . . . . The relationship between CinCPac and CGFMFPac and CinCPac staff and CGFMFPac staff was very, very cordial.[5]

Besides maintaining contact with higher headquarters through FMFPac, III MAF regularly sent representatives to the CinCPac movement planning conferences and other meetings concerned with redeployment. III MAF passed redeployment directives to subordinate commands; coordinated plans for unit reliefs, stand downs, and embarkations; and dealt with MACV, the other Services within Vietnam, and the South Vietnamese on such matters as equipment turnovers and real estate transfers. The 1st Marine Division, 1st MAW, and FLC had primary responsibility for preparing men and equipment for embarkation and moving them to piers and airports on schedule. For this purpose, the 1st Marine Division in January 1970 activated a Logistic Operations Center under the G-4. The Division Embarkation Officer and his staff continually inspected redeploying units and assisted subordinate units in making inventories and other preparations.[6]

The plans for redeployment increments were drafted in terms of units to be redeployed or deactivated and total numbers of troops to be deducted from the authorized strength of each Service in Vietnam. To carry out the Marine Corps portion of each plan, HQMC and FMFPac had to determine which individual Marines to redeploy to bring III MAF down to the required size and assign the men thus selected to departing units. In deciding who should redeploy and who should stay, the Marine commanders had to strike a balance between contradictory military requirements. Lieutenant General Jones explained:

> It was necessary to consider a whole host of complex problems such as the retention of needed skills in WestPac, readiness of remaining as well as redeploying units, the need for key personnel in each redeploying unit, tour equity for the individual Marine. Many of these considerations are counterproductive and finding the right combination has been a real experience in every sense of the word.[7]

In practice, tour equity overshadowed all other considerations. Those Marines with the fewest months remaining in their current 12-month tours normally were selected for each redeployment. In Keystone Bluejay, men who had served nine months or more of their tours were considered eligible; in Keystones Robin Alpha and Robin Charlie, Marines whose tours were scheduled to end on or before a particular month were earmarked for redeployment. Eligible Marines with skills urgently needed by remaining III MAF units were kept in Vietnam in each redeployment, while a few noneligibles needed to guard and maintain equipment in transit were sent home early. This was not always the benefit it seemed to be, as such assignments frequently entailed long, dull voyages on amphibious ships packed with miscellaneous vehicles and stores.

Since III MAF units always included Marines with a mixture of end-of-tour dates, no redeploying unit could simply leave with its existing personnel. Instead, in a process nicknamed the "mixmaster," each unit selected for redeployment to Hawaii or the continental United States transferred its noneligible Marines to organizations staying in Vietnam and at the same time filled its ranks with eligible Marines from other commands. As a result, few units returned to the United States composed of Marines who had served with the unit in Vietnam. Units bound for Okinawa and Japan underwent much less "mixmastering." In order to maintain combat readiness, these commands embarked with their existing personnel, including Marines otherwise eligible for redeployment, who simply completed their Western Pacific tours at their new stations.[8]

To implement these complex manpower reshuffles, HQMC delegated broad transfer and reassignment authority to FMFPac. The FMFPac staff broke down each redeployment into numbers of Marines of each rank, grade, and skill who were to be redeployed from the 1st MAW, 1st Marine Division, and Force Logistic Command, either by transfer to redeploying organizations or by normal rotation. A liaison team from FMFPac, located at III MAF Headquarters, briefed the commands on these strength reduction requirements and where necessary assisted in their implementation. Each of the major III MAF subordinate commands, through its G-1 section, then screened its own personnel for Marines eligible for redeployment, arranged for the necessary transfers between units, and prepared and issued the thousands of individual orders and transportation requests required. FMFPac, besides overseeing this "mixmaster," periodically halted or reduced the flow of replacements to III MAF to assure compliance with post-redeployment manpower ceilings. FMFPac also directed special transfers of III MAF personnel to units on Okinawa and in Japan, both to reduce numbers in Vietnam and to rebuild other Western Pacific commands.[9]

This complicated process did not always go smoothly. Late notification of the highly classified redeployment plans often forced the division, wing, and FLC to do their own planning and implementation on extremely short notice. Compounding this problem, the exact strength and composition of Marine units varied almost from day to day, due to casualties, rotations, and replacements.* With the aid of computers, the various staffs could make the necessary calculations in time for the results to still be valid; but the different headquarters often worked from different data bases. Inevitably, mistakes occurred. Personnel redeployments were attended by much organizational disruption and individual frustrations.

Marine commanders almost universally deplored the impact of the "mixmaster" on unit effectiveness and on the well-being of the individual Marine. For both redeploying and nonredeploying units, mass personnel transfers resulted in the loss of key Marines and undermined morale and efficiency. In Keystone Robin Alpha, VMFA-314 was "mixmastered" three times in as many months because of changes in redeployment plans; finally officers from squadrons staying in Vietnam had to be assigned to temporary duty with VMFA-314 to fly out the squadron's aircraft. Unavoidably, with such personnel turbulence, "the man didn't know who he worked for; the supervisor didn't know who was working for him."[10]

As one redeployment increment followed another, a Marine with most of his Vietnam tour yet to serve might be shunted from organization to organization, sometimes too rapidly for his own mail to follow him. According to General Armstrong:

> As units folded up and left Vietnam, a young fellow would go from the 7th Marines . . . to the 5th Marines; then, as one of their outfits would leave, they'd shift him to a different outfit and finally [he] ended up in the 1st Marines. And then if he still had the most time to do, why he'd end up in the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines because that was the unit that was going to go home last . . . . In a period of six months, he might have been in seven organizations.[11]

In each redeployment, security requirements prevented commanders from informing their troops concerning who was going home and when. The resulting spate of rumors and contradictory information adversely affected morale. Delayed instructions or last-minute changes in instructions kept commanders themselves uncertain who could redeploy almost to the moment that troop movements were ordered As Colonel Robert W. Teller, the 1st MAW Chief of Staff put it, "you're a day before the boats are sailing and you still don't know who's leaving town."[12] The repeated alterations of plans for Keystone Robin Alpha forced HQMC to revise the individual redeployment criteria after embarkations actually had begun,

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A355179

BGen Ross T. Dwyer, Jr., in khaki and facing the formation, greets returning Marines from Vietnam on board the USS Mobile *(AKC 115) at San Diego.*

*A HQMC handbook for manpower planners, issued in 1969, likened the Marine Corps manpower system to a bath tub with a faucet at one end and a drain at the other. Water constantly flows in from the faucet and runs out the drain. The objective of the "plumber"/manpower planner is to adjust this flow so as to keep a given number of gallons (Marines) in the tub at any one time and to assure that each gallon spends a fixed length of time (tour of duty) in the tub. The basic rate of flow could be calculated with this equation: rate of flow (manpower input) equals the number of gallons in tub (strength) divided by the time in tub (tour length). By this formula, to keep III MAF at a strength of 24,000 Marines, each serving a 12-month tour, required a monthly replacement rate of 2,000 men (24,000 divided by 12 months). This was an oversimplification, since casualties in Vietnam and attrition from various causes elsewhere in the system would force adustments in the replacement flow to compensate. To plan a redeployment, one had to calculate normal inflow and outflow, allow for attrition, and then determine how much additional water had to be bailed out to bring the water level down to a set point by a given time. Add to this the further complication that the "water" in fact was not uniform, but was a mixture of different temperatures (ranks and skills) which had to be kept in a prescribed balance. G-1 Division, HQMC, "The Plumber's Helper: for Manpower Planners" (Washington: HQMC, 1969).

rendering ineligible Marines who had already received aircraft or shipping assignments. Out of 1,400 1st Marine Division troops in one Keystone Robin Alpha embarkation unit, 512 had to be told they were not redeploying. Other Marines, as a result of staff work incomplete for lack of time, found themselves leaving Vietnam without permanent new station assignments. These unfortunates included General Armstrong. The 3d MAB commander recalled:

> CG, FMFPac had to send me temporary duty orders so I could leave the country [with 3d MAB]. I did not have the advantage of a permanent change of station (PCS) assignment . . . . I went back to Hawaii and stayed there on temporary duty assignment for three weeks before my assignment came through.

Another who was affected was Colonel Don H. Blanchard, the chief of staff of the 1st Division, who was held at Camp Pendleton for more than a month awaiting orders.[13]

Manpower shortages, both in overall strength and in particular ranks and specialties, plagued III MAF during and between redeployment. Anticipating an early redeployment following Keystone Bluejay, HQMC and FMFPac reduced replacements to III MAF. This action resulted in severe personnel shortages when Keystone Robin Alpha was delayed until July 1970. By that month, the division and wing each were about 1,000 Marines below their manning levels,* with deficiencies in aviation specialists and field grade officers among the shortages.[14] Throughout late 1970 and early 1971, the flow of replacements was uneven and unpredictable. In the 1st Marine Division, according to Colonel Hugh S. Aitken, the G-1, "The input flow . . . varied so considerably that we were either faced with . . . a significant excess of personnel or a significant shortage . . . . Very seldom did the division stabilize at its authorized strength ceiling." Repeatedly, the division found itself with surpluses of some specialists and shortages of others. Advance information on the composition of new replacement drafts often proved inaccurate. Aitken reported: "We . . . try to plan for 350 O3s [riflemen] coming in in a given month, and we end up with 50 of those and maybe 200 communicators . . . . The entire personnel plan for that month and succeeding months is useless at that point." Aitken attributed these deficiencies to the difficulty of maintaining uniform, up-to-date strength information at all the headquarters involved in manpower movement and assignment.*[15]

Redeploying units began embarkation preparations two or more months before their scheduled date of departure. While still conducting combat operations, they began taking inventory of their equipment and packing or disposing of everything not immediately required for their missions. They cancelled requisitions and began sending nonessential vehicles and material to staging areas near Da Nang. The 5th Marines, which embarked in March 1971, established an Embarkation Readiness Center at Hill 34, the CP of its 1st Battalion, in December 1970, to process and store its equipment. By the beginning of March, when it stood down from operations, the regiment already had packed and prepared 85 percent of the material with which it would embark.[16]

Units normally stood down two or three weeks before embarkation and moved to secure cantonments near Da Nang. There, they "mixmastered" their personnel and finished packing and turning in supplies and equipment, often drawing transportation, messing, and other support from nonredeploying commands. During March 1971, Major Francis M. Kauffman, Executive Officer, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, described to his men what they could expect during stand-down:

> This will be a fast moving, stressful period while we transfer personnel to other in-country units, to Okinawa, or to ConUS. At the same time, all equipment must be cleaned, checked by technicians, packaged for shipment and staged for embarkation. The next few weeks require cooperation all around. You can expect hard work, crowded living conditions at first, many inspections and formations . . . . Many of you will not be on the lines again.[17]

Few redeploying organizations left Vietnam *en masse*. Instead, during stand-down, units gradually lost strength from transfers and individual redeployments by air or ship. The 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, which stood down in February 1971, dropped during the month from 33 Marine officers and 1,066 enlisted men to 22 officers and 230 men. It sent 441 Ma-

*The number of Marines of particular ranks, grades, and MOSs in a particular type of unit is established by its table of organization (T/O). The Marine Corps, in Vietnam and elsewhere, was forced by overall manpower shortages to keep most organizations at less than T/O strength. This reduced strength was called the "manning level," normally established as a percentage of T/O strength.

*The automated Marine Corps Manpower Management System (MMS) was designed to permit accurate measurement of strength at any time, but due to a shortage of trained personnel to operate it, the system in Vietnam was undermined by errors. The 1st Marine Division had a MMS error rate of 15-17 percent until early 1971. Aitken Debrief.

rines to the United States and transferred 395 to the 1st Marines and Force Logistic Command.[18] At the appointed embarkation date, after a farewell parade, at least a token command group with the unit colors would emplane for their new station. Other contingents would board ships to accompany their unit's heavy equipment.

'Mixmastering' of Equipment and Real Estate

At the beginning of each redeployment, FMFPac instructed units concerning which categories of equipment and supplies to take with them and which items of equipment to turn in to FLC for redistribution to the Marine Corps or other United States and allied forces. Until Keystone Robin Alpha, units left Vietnam with their standard allowances of clothing, weapons, and vehicles and with some medical supplies, packaged fuel and lubricants, and spare parts. They divested themselves of all rations, ammunition, bulk POL, and extra or special southeast Asia allowance equipment. Units being deactivated left most of their material in Vietnam. III MAF "mixmastered" equipment, as well as Marines, so that the newest items and those items in the best condition remained with the organizations still committed to combat. Aircraft squadrons, for example, exchanged airplanes to keep in Vietnam those most recenrly returned from progressive aircraft rework (PAR).* Redeploying units as a result often embarked with unserviceable equipment; of 90 MAG-16 vehicles loaded on one LST, only one was driven on under its own power. To alleviate this difficulty MAG-16 early in 1971 stationed a group staff officer familiar with redeployment plans at Futema to inform the MAG-16 elements there what material to expect in shipments from Vietnam and to help material repair and rehabilitation. As redeployment progressed, however, the loads of gear that were retrograded were organized more carefully and were in better shape.[19]

The intricacies of reshuffling personnel and equipment affected some units more adversely than others. Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Wehrle, who was the executive officer and then commanding officer of Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division from September 1970 to May 1971, recalled that his battalion became heavily reinforced with both people and equipment. The vehicles, alone, that Headquarters Battalion acquired through this process created a great burden because they had to be cleaned, painted, and restenciled before they were loaded on the ships. The battalion became responsible for the condition of the vehicles, many of which were marginally serviceable, and had to meet the "Department of Agriculture requirement that these vehicles be showroom clean before they could be returned to the continental U.S." This requirement was made more difficult because the one steam jenny in the motor transport platoon in Service Company was of little value when it was working well and at the time it was barely working. "Even if it had been in top working order," said Wehrle, "we had another problem and that was the limited amount of water that we had because of the repeated breaking of the line coming from the airfield over to the division." Lastly, the motor transport platoon's size had been depleted by redeployment of personnel.

In an effort to meet the deadline, Wehrle hired Vietnamese and placed them on a round-the-clock work schedule. Vehicles were rolled on their sides and Marine supervisors "literally put Vietnamese on them like ants with knives, what have you, scraping to get the grease, mud, and everything off of them." According to Wehrle, just a few days before redeployment, the Army provided Headquarters Battalion with efficient steam jennies:

> . . . they would set up almost like a conveyor belt line, . . . and I'd bring a convoy of vehicles through and they would turn their steam jennies loose on them and clean up the last amount of dirt that was on them. But this was touch and go and, as I recall, we finished up the last vehicles, I believe, the day before we were to move them to Da Nang and stage them.

Finally, before the vehicles were actually staged to be reloaded, they were repainted and stenciled and displayed for the Vietnamese to pick what they wanted. "This went to them as military assistance," said Wehrle, and what remained "was embarked and returned to Camp Pendleton."[20]

The experience of Communication Support Company (CSC) of 7th Communication Battalion, which in September 1970 assumed responsibilities of the deactivated 5th Communication Battalion, was as frustrating as Headquarters Battalion after inheriting the 5th's equipment including 137 vehicles. For the next 10 months, CSC labored to clean, paint and, in general, rehabilitate the equipment to a degree acceptable for retrograde from Vietnam. Although CSC finally succeeded in cleaning and retrograding all salvagea-

*Under the PAR system, at specified intervals, each Marine aircraft in Vietnam was shipped to aircraft plants in Japan for complete disassembly and rehabilitation. PAR intervals ranged from 18 months for A-4s to 25 months for UH-1Es. FMFPac MarOps, Dec66, pp. 77-78.

ble gear which had been transferred to its accounts, thousands of man-hours were spent preparing unwanted acquisitions and their organic gear which included over 100 vehicles, prime movers and towed loads, 25 CONEX boxes of miscellaneous equipment, as well as maintenance, radio and microwave equipment shelters. And all this was accomplished while CSC provided the preponderance of equipment, facilities, and personnel for the brigade communications center. Major Robert T. Himmerich, who commanded CSC prior to redeployment, observed years later: "Units and organizations that made up III MAF and then 3d MAB should have displaced from Vietnam to wherever ordered and taken their equipment and supplies with them. Deactivation should have been effected only after all accounts were settled."[21]

III MAF redistributed excess equipment turned in by departing units, and in some instances also regular allowance equipment,* under priorities and programs established by FMFPac and MACV. Generally, Marine units still in Vietnam had first claim, followed by the Vietnamese Marine Corps and the 2d ROKMC Brigade. On 1 August 1970, MACV initiated Project 805, a program under which all equipment of departing units, both standard allowance and excess, was screened for items needed by the South Vietnamese Armed Forces. Later in 1970, MACV established a similar program to meet the needs of United States Services in Vietnam. Any excess Marine unit equipment not selected for either of these programs went to FMFPac organizations outside Vietnam or to rebuild mountout and mountout augmentation (MO/MOA)** stocks throughout the Pacific.[22]

To supervise and coordinate implementation of these programs, III MAF established a Redistribution Center under its G-4. This staff unit supervised equipment transfers between Marine organizations and to the South Vietnamese and other United States and allied forces. Colonel Allan T. Wood, III MAF G-4, observed: "You won't find this organization on a T/O, for it was never provided for, and it's an exceptional requirement existing only in . . . redeployment."[23]

III MAF took special care in selecting and preparing equipment for MACV's Project 805. Thirty to 35 days before a Marine unit was to redeploy, III MAF compared the unit's list of equipment, both standard allowance and excess on hand for United States and Hawaii-bound units and excess on hand only for organizations going to Okinawa or Japan, against a MACV list of RVNAF needs. III MAF then nominated the appropriate items to HQMC for turnover. After HQMC arranged for one-for-one reimbursement in kind by the Army and approved the transaction, Marine technicians carefully inspected each item as the owning unit stood down. Equipment offered to the

CH-46 Sea Knight aircraft from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161 are lined up at the Tien Sha Deep Water Pier near Da Nang for redeployment.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A422854

*This was known as Table of Equipment (T/E) allowance and included the unit's weapons and vehicles.

**As forces in readiness, Marine Corps units maintained special stocks of reserve supplies to support them during initial deployment. These stocks were divided into two 30-day blocks. The first, designated the Mountout block, was supposed to be held by the unit and move with it. The second, or Mountout Augmentation block, was carried by the service support unit (FSR or service battalion) responsible for support of the combat unit for which the block was intended. During 1965-1966, Marine units had brought both these blocks into Vietnam and used them up. The blocks had not been reconstituted during the war. In December 1968, FMFPac began planning to rebuild them, using excess material resulting from anticipated redeployments. The effort got under way in July 1969, with redeployment of the 3d Marine Division, based mainly on use of excess equipment from units; but it did not achieve great momentum until FLC and the 3d FSR on Okinawa were able to release their excess supplies during late 1970 and early 1971. Soper, "Logistics," pp. 210-211; FMFPac, MarOps, Jun70, pp. 40-41, Dec70, p. 69.

South Vietnamese had to meet exacting standards set by III MAF. Trucks, for instance, could have surface scratches and mildewed seat cushions; but engines, transmissions, brakes, instruments, horns, lights, and windshield wipers had to work; the battery had to have at least nine months of life left; and a vehicle could not have over 17,000 miles on its speedometer. After the Marines weeded out substandard pieces, representatives from the ARVN 1st Area Logistic Command inspected the equipment again and selected what they wanted.

Between the start of Project 805 in August 1970 and the end of Marine participation in it in May of the following year, III MAF/3d MAB offered 11,480 separate items to the South Vietnamese. These items included radios, mine detectors, grenade launchers, machine guns, rifles, pistols, trucks, night vision sights, 105mm howitzers, and even war dogs. The Vietnamese accepted 10,733 of these offerings, an acceptance rate for Marine equipment of 94 percent. By contrast, of the much larger amounts of material offered by the U.S. Army, the Vietnamese took only about 15 percent. Marines attributed this difference to their own stringent pretransfer inspections and more careful preparation.*[24] Colonel Kenneth McLennan later noted that while Project 805 served the Army and the RVNAF, it was not "simply an altruistic effort on the part of the Corps." The Marine Corps "received either dollar credit or replacement in kind in CONUS for every item turned over."[25]

By the time the last 3d MAB units left Vietnam, the Marines had redistributed 328,000 pieces of unit equipment valued at $50,409,000. Of the dollar value, 86.7 percent remained within the Marine Corps, most of it in Western Pacific commands. Another 8.7 percent by value went to the RVNAF and 3 percent to the South Korean Marines. The MACV interservice transfer program in Vietnam, which had gotten off to a late start, accounted for only 1.6 percent.[26]

As units redeployed, Force Logistic Command grappled with the problem of disposing of five years of accumulated supplies and equipment. At the beginning of 1970, FLC estimated that it had over 170,000 tons of material to be redeployed in its operating stocks and maintenance "float,"* plus another 3,800 tons of property organic to its own units and 259,156 square feet of vehicles. During the year, turned-in equipment from departing organizations and the arrival of requisitioned supplies, no longer needed, enlarged the mass of material for which FLC was directly responsible. Since FLC had to maintain reserve stocks in proportion to III MAF strength, it defined its equipment redeployment problem and measured success in terms of disposing of "excesses." Excesses were a matter of accounting definition. Colonel Robert W. Calvert, G-3 of FLC, explained:

> The . . . stock account is constantly changing . . . from receipts, turn-ins, inventory gains and losses, recomputation of requisitioning objectives, and then one of the major factors that affects the excesses is the reduction in forces. You get a reduction in force and your excesses go way sky high.[27]

Disposition of FLC excesses, like that of unit equipment, followed policies and priorities established by the Department of Defense and Headquarters Marine Corps. Fundamental was General Chapman's often-repeated injunction to pull out of Vietnam every usable piece of Marine Corps material worth more than five dollars. FLC did its best to comply with the spirit, if not the letter, of this policy. In redistributing excess supplies and equipment not part of the regular allowance of units ("non-table of equipment," or non-T/E equipment), reconstitution of Western Pacific MO/MOA stocks received first priority, followed by replenishment of Western Pacific operating stocks. The Marine Corps offered material not required for these purposes to the Pacific Command Utilization and Redistribution Agency (PURA), an organization established by the Department of Defense to shift supplies among American military and civilian agencies in the Pacific. FLC stock excesses not picked up by PURA flowed back into the Marine Corps supply system for use within the United States and elsewhere.[28]

During January 1970, Force Logistic Command opened a Retrograde Facility for repair, salvage, packing, and storage of FLC material and that turned in by units to be prepared for shipment. Built by Marine engineers about a mile from FLC Headquarters at Camp Books, the Retrograde Facility consisted of workshops; loading ramps; hardstands; vehicle wash racks; 10,300 square feet of maintenance area; 244,000

*Unlike Marine units, Army organizations normally did not redeploy with their equipment. Instead, they left it in depots for later disposition or transfer. Marine units, by contrast, prepared their own equipment for RVNAF or other transfer and turned it over right at their stand-down cantonments. Wood Debrief.

*The maintenance float was a reserve of large pieces of equipment which could be issued temporarily to units to replace items turned in for repair.

square feet of paved, open storage; and 4,200 square feet of covered storage. The facility's staff of 50 Marines could prepare for embarkation any item of equipment from an M16 rifle to a 60-ton tank. During peak activity, Marines of the facility processed an average of 1,000 ordnance items, 500-800 pieces of communication equipment, and 400-500 vehicles per month. Marines of the facility also salvaged and shipped out brass cartridge cases and reconditioned and reissued jungle camouflage uniforms, and collected damaged body armor and sent it to the 3d FSR on Okinawa for repair and reuse.[29]

FLC began preliminary steps in early 1970 to consolidate, control, and use up its supply stocks. During January, FLSG-B set up its own Disposal/Redistribution Collection Point for handling its excesses as they developed. FLC in March established procedures for cancelling units' equipment requisitions and meeting their requirements instead with items left by redeploying organizations. In May, FLC launched a "Care and Store" program. Under the program, work crews pulled particular categories of supplies out of storage, opened the packages, discarded deteriorated items, repacked the rest, and where possible placed the repacked material in warehouses rather than open lots. FLC also tried to collect each supply item at one storage location. In January, FLC had 190,000 separate entries in its storage locator file; by October FLC had reduced the number of entries to 80,000, partly by issue and shipment and partly by rearrangement of the stock. Marines of the Supply Battalion recovered barbed wire and stakes from vacated American fortifications, cleaned them, and packed them for shipment to the 3d FSR.[30]

In November 1970, Force Logistic Command undertook a final sustained effort to identify and dispose of its excesses. Marines of Supply Battalion, assisted by Marines of Maintenance Battalion, made a detailed inventory and inspection of FLC's operating stocks, to determine how much material listed in the accounts actually was on hand and in what condition. Maintenance Battalion at the same time reviewed the equipment "float" in the light of reduced III MAF strength to determine how much of the float was now in excess. By 12 November, FLC had computed the value of excesses at $15,000,000. Brigadier General James R. Jones, CGFLC, years later stated: "Excess material then had to be screened against established priorities, packed and embarked for various destinations. At the same time, requisitions had to be cancelled for items no longer needed and an effort made to halt or divert to new destinations items already shipped before they reached Vietnam and added to the existing surplus."[31]

For the next six months, all elements of FLC labored to find and eliminate excesses. In the process, the command had to overcome a number of problems. Much material in warehouses and storage lots turned out to have been misidentified or mislocated, often as a result of mistakes by Vietnamese civilian employees unfamiliar with the English language. Other equipment had deteriorated in outside storage in the heat and humidity. Supply Battalion's Preservation, Packing, and Packaging (PP&P) Facility, its work load vastly increased, ran short of packaging material and manpower. FLC shifted Marines from other elements into the packaging shop and eventually reorganized the PP&P facility into three separate production lines, so that Marines not trained in packaging and preservation could work on the least complicated items.

Paperwork procedures had to be revised to move the required volume of supplies in the limited time available. FLC and the Marine Corps Supply Activity (MCSA) in Philadelphia developed shortcuts to speed disposition of various items. In January 1971, HQMC authorized FLC to declare certain types of equipment unserviceable or obsolete on its own authority, whereas previously FLC had to submit a Recoverable Item Report (RIR) to Philadelphia on each piece. These actions reduced message traffic and saved the Marine Corps both time and money. Bottlenecks developed in the PURA system. Exesses offered through PURA had to remain available for 75 days, during which period FLC could not ship or otherwise dispose of them. Any increase item resulted in a new PURA offering for that item, entailing further delay of its disposition. Brigadier General Jones recalled that "FLC broke this logjam by monitoring the items which had been offered to PURA and subsequently at selected intervals force releasing selected quantities of these PURA-reported excess items to the Marine Corps supply system."[32]

Force Logistic Command mounted a major effort to halt shipment of supplies requisitioned but no longer needed. Material requisitioned from the Marine supply system in the United States could take up to 160 days to reach Vietnam; as redeployments proceeded much of it became excess en route due to withdrawal of the ordering unit or reduction of the required FLC operating reserves. By November 1970, this material, known as "excess due-ins" had a total

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A373827

A self-propelled 155mm howitzer backs onto the ramp of the Landing Ship Tank Pitkin County *(LST 1082) at Da Nang as the Marines in 1971 continue their redeployment from Vietnam. Note the head of the driver can be seen under the barrel of the gun.*

value of $8,100,000. To remove these excesses from its books, FLC had to trace the requisitions through the system and cancel them, as well as stop or divert the actual goods in transit. FLC finally resorted to block cancellation of all requisitions for III MAF units except those specifically identified as still necessary, and FLC arranged for stoppage of the material wherever it was then in the "pipeline." As a result of close cooperation between FLC, the 3d FSR, and MCSA Philadelphia, this procedure proved effective, and "by the end of May 1971, the value of excess due-ins had been reduced to $2,400."[33]

In March 1971, FLC began shipping out its remaining supply stocks. By the end of the following month, the command had emptied most of its warehouses and storage lots. The Marines also carried away many of the warehouses themselves. To meet a need for storage at Marine bases in Okinawa and Japan, III MAF early in 1971 obtained permission from MACV to dismantle and remove 55 prefabricated steel Butler buildings from its installations. Company A, 7th Engineer Battalion took the structures apart and by early May FLC had packed the components and sent most of them out of Vietnam.[34]

Between 12 November 1970 and 26 April 1971, Force Logistic Command disposed of $23,000,000 worth of excess supplies and equipment, including the $15,000,000 initially identified and material subsequently turned in by units or arriving from the United States. In the same period, FLC reduced its occupied storage space from 800,000 cubic feet to 501,000. Of the material thus redistributed, 3 percent by value was used to reconstitute Pacific mountout and mountout augmentation stocks; 25 percent went into

Pacific operating supplies; 7 percent was taken up through PURA; 53 percent returned to the Marine Corps supply system; and 12 percent was disposed of as unserviceable.[35]

FLC's large-scale effort to recover all possible equipment and supplies loaded Marine bases on Okinawa and in Japan with much unusable material. Some officers said that the receiving commands were not warned of the poor condition of the material that was arriving. Brigadier General James R. Jones, later viewed the retrograde of material differently, challenging the suggestion that commands in Okinawa and Japan became respositories for unusuable gear:

> There was never a directive or policy to retrograde unusable/unserviceable supplies (expendable items). Units did acquire unserviceable (but repairable) equipment through the various exchange programs but not in excess of authorized equipment allowances. Unserviceable equipment retrograded by FLC to the 3d FSR on Okinawa was within the commands' authorized allowances and ability to repair.[36]

"While the massive retrograde of III MAF material and equipment did cause storage difficulties and equipment repair backlogs at bases on Okinawa and in Japan," the recovery effort nevertheless contributed to rebuilding Marine Corps logistic readiness in the Pacific. In July 1971, Lieutenant General Jones, CGFMFPac, could report that Western Pacific mountout and mountout augmentation stocks had been fully reestablished.[37]

All equipment and supplies being shipped back to the United States, whether by redeploying units or by FLC, had to meet exacting standards of cleanliness set by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Public Health Service to prevent the introduction of Asian insect pests and contagious diseases into the United States. USDA and Public Health Service inspectors closely examined each shipload of vehicles and cargo; nothing could go on board without their approval. Packing boxes had to be of termite-free, untotted wood. All containers, closed vehicle bodies, and shipborne aircraft had to be sealed and treated with specified amounts and types of insecticides and rat poisons. Vehicles used for years in Vietnam's mud and dust had to be treated with a mixture of fuel oil and kerosene, scraped with wire brushes to remove caked soil and vegetation, and then hosed down with water under high pressure. Having cleaned the vehicle, Marines had to sand and spot paint all areas requiring it, coat unpainted metal surfaces with protective oil, and carefully pack all tools and accessories. After the unual dusty and muddy drive to the dock, they had to wash the vehicle once again before it could be embarked. Helicopters, which also picked up much Vietnamese dust and ditt, were if anything more difficult to decontaminate. Lieutenant Colonel William R. Fails, MAG-16 S-4, estimated that clearing a single CH-46 required up to 100 man-hours of labor, "if the bird was in reasonable shape" to begin with.[38]

Owning units were responsible for cleaning and preparing the equipment they were taking with them, while FLC packaged and decontaminated its own equipment, as well as excess items turned in by redeploying organizations. Both FLC and the 1st Engineer Battalion assisted redeploying units in preparing their equipment. Force Logistic Command, besides furnishing packing and cleaning materials, provided washdown ramps at its Retrograde Facility for use of other organizations. The 1st Engineer Battalion set up a vehicle washing facility at its cantonment and maintained last-minute washing points at the Da Nang Deep Water Piers and at two of the LST ramps.[39]

While most redeploying fixed-wing squadrons could fly their aircraft to their new stations,* helicopters posed a special embarkation problem. Some redeploying helicopter squadrons simply flew on board LPHs, but as MAG-16 prepared for its final redeployments in early 1971, it was apparent that many aircraft would have to be loaded on other types of amphibious and cargo vessels at the Deep Water Piers. Since the wharves lacked space for landing and decontaminating an entire squadron at one time, the helicopters would have to be cleaned and protected at Marble Mountain for the voyage and then towed the 12 miles to the docks through a heavily populated area vulner-

*Fixed-wing squadrons displacing to the United States and Hawaii conducted trans-Pacific flights (TransPacs), involving planned stops in the Philippines and on Guam, Wake, and Midway or Johnston Island, with aerial refuelling at the midpoint of each leg of the trip. Besides refuelling the planes in the air, KC-130Fs of VMGRs -152 and -352 transported squadron maintenance and control personnel and equipment to meet the aircraft at each stopover. The Marine Corps had used this system since the early 1960s to move squadrons between the United States and the Western Pacific. It saved expense and helped maintain squadron integrity. By the time the last TransPac out of Vietnam, VMA(AW)-225 to MCAS El Toro, was completed on 10 May 1971, 590 Marine aircraft had made the crossing, either eastbound or westbound. Only three aircraft had been lost due to equipment failure, and no crewmen had been killed or injured. FMFPac MarOps, May-Jun71, pp. 19-22, recapitulates TransPac operations, listing each separate redeployment.

able to enemy infiltration. MAG-16 had previously moved individual aircraft to the Deep Water Piers without harassment, but the 23 or 24 helicopters of an entire squadron constituted a target worth the risk to the enemy of setting up a large ambush.

Beginning with the redeployment of HMM-364 in March 1917, MAG-16 conducted a series of convoys in which helicopters were towed from Marble Mountain to the deep water piers. Each convoy required elaborate planning, rehearsals, and security measures. Movement began around midnight; and no one, except the group commander and key staff officers, was told the convoy date until two hours before departure. A truck carrying several armed Marines towed each helicopter, and the column included fire engines, bulldozers, and cranes. Army MPs blocked all side roads intersecting the convoy route, holding people and vehicles beyond grenade range. Marine drivers and guards had instructions that "if an aircraft is attacked or somebody throws a grenade in it, push it in the ditch and keep the other[s] . . . moving." As a result of these precautions, all convoys completed the two- and one-half hour trip without incident. In the largest movement, on 18-19 May, MAG-16 transported 47 aircraft to the piers in a single night—37 CH-46Ds, 3 CH-53Ds, and 7 UH-1Es.[40]

Of the total number of Marines redeploying during 1969-1971, about 30 percent left Vietnam by ship. The rest departed on commerical aircraft chartered by the Military Airlift Command and allocated by MACV. In contrast, 90 percent of tonnage of all Marine equipment and cargo went by sea. Most of this cargo, as well as most surface-transported Marines, traveled in Navy amphibious vessels furnished by CinCPacFlt. Each Keystone redeployment required most of the amphibious shipping in the Western Pacific, from LPHs to LSTs. During each redeployment, one of the two Seventh Fleet Special Landing Forces stood down temporarily to permit the vessels of its amphibious ready group to join in the sealift. Pacific Fleet when necessary diverted additional ships from the Eastern Pacific. LSTs shuttled troops and cargo to Japan and Okinawa. To move freight, especially FLC's excess stock, the Marines took advantage of every available amphibious ship, including LSTs returning to the United States to be broken up for scrap. FMFPac Headquarters closely watched ship movements and informed FLC whenever a ship was due to arrive at Da Nang with empty cargo space. FLC then quickly diverted Marines from other jobs to prepare cargo already designated for embarkation and to haul it to the piers. During Keystone Bluejay alone, FLC squeezed 94,000 squate feet of vehicles and 486,000 cubic feet of freight onto eastbound amphibious ships. Between 1969 and 1971, reliance on Navy ships saved the Marine Corps about $18,000,000 in commerical freight costs, as well as affording useful embarkation training to both Marines and ships' crews.[41]

As Marines left Vietnam with their supplies and equipment, III MAF and later 3d MAB had to dispose of an increasing number of empty bases and camps. III MAF possessed exclusive authority to transfer or demolish OPs, most firebases, and other combat positions; but later installations, such as An Hoa, Baldy, and the Division Ridge complex, had to be first offered to the other United States Services and the South Vietnamese under procedures established and supervised by MACV. During most of 1970, the Navy Civil Engineering/Real Property Office at Da Nang maintained the records on Marine as well as Navy installations and performed most of the staff work on base transfer. On 1 October, as a result of continued Navy reductions in force, III MAF had to take over management of its own real estate. III MAF then established a Real Estate/Base Development Officer under its G-4 staff section. The office consisted of a Marine major assisted by a Navy engineer lieutenant, two draftsmen, and a clerk-typist. This office, which continued in operation under the 3d MAB, notified MACV when Marine camps became vacant, and prepared the documents for offering and transferring the installations.[42]

Real estate transfers, especially to the South Vietnamese, were a complex, often frustrating task. Property turnovers included elaborate paperwork. Colonel Wood, III MAF G-4, reported: "It takes a minimum of four separate, detailed reports to transfer a piece of property . . . . We finally end up . . . with a heavily detailed report and a legal agreement which must be bilingual . . . and signed by the respective commanders for both governments."[43] The secrecy of redeployment planning prevented III MAF and other U.S. commands from opening base turnover discussions with the Vietnamese until late in each withdrawal. The Vietnamese, who were poorly organized and equipped to manage their own facilities, made decisions slowly and only after much haggling and American pressure. Most important, as American strength diminished, more camps were available than the remaining allied forces needed or could protect.

Colonel John W. Haggerty III, the MAF G-3, pointed out in late 1970:

> One of the problems . . . all over is going to be getting rid of real estate . . . . We don't want [the ARVN] to end up doing nothing but guarding property . . . . But we've got so darn much . . . real estate in Vietnam, not just the Marine Corps but everybody, that it takes twice the ARVN forces just to guard it all. . . .[44]

In spite of these difficulties, III MAF gradually rid itself of its surplus real estate. III MAF turned over 26 camps and bases in Keystone Robin Charlie and Oriole Alpha. The Marines tried to leave each installation immaculate and in good repair. Major General Widdecke, the 1st Marine Division Commander, according to his G-4, "was very interested in the Marine Corps image in turning over this property" and insisted that electric fixtures and toilets must work and that screens and doors on huts be correctly installed. At combat positions, under division orders, "all waste will be buried [and] bunkers, trenches and fighting holes will be left in place."[45]

III MAF also tried to clean up its battlefield. In April 1970, Lieutenant General McCutcheon instituted a program to find and retrieve wrecked Marine tanks, amphibian tractors, aircraft, trucks, and other large pieces of equipment that littered the Quang Nam countryside after five years of war. Marines from FLC's Maintenance Battalion assisted by division and force engineer elements, located 144 hulks. Using cranes, bulldozers, and recovery vehicles, work crews extricated the wrecks and dragged them to the U.S. Army Property Disposal salvage yard. On one occasion, Company A, 1st Engineer Battalion dug up and turned in seven amphibian tractors buried near the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines CP at Camp Lauer. This particular recovery required 714 man-hours of work and the employment of 13 cranes, tractors, and other pieces of earthmoving and salvage equipment. Helicopter support team Marines of Company C, 1st Shore Party Battalion, also played a large role in retrieval of abandoned gear. For HST Marines this salvage mission usually required "an early morning home LZ helicopter pickup and insertion at a remote site to effect helicopter retrieval of downed aircraft and destroyed equipment." The mission often demanded ingenuity of HST Marines "to gain access and rig the lifts." Of the 144 wrecks located, Marines had removed 125 by April 1971. The Marines could have retrieved the remaining 19 hulks only at excessive risk to men and equipment and hence left them where they were.[46]

The immense logistic effort accomplished its intended purpose. When the last ship of Keystone Oriole Alpha, the USS *Saint Louis* (LKA 116), sailed from Da Nang on 25 June 1971, the only major pieces of Marine Corps material left behind were several Butler buildings packed on trailers and awaiting pickup by a commerical roll-on-roll-off cargo vessel. General Armstrong reported: "As far as I know, that's the only usable property that belonged to us that was still there."[47]

PART VI
THE CLOSE OF AN ERA

CHAPTER 20

Morale and Discipline

A Time of Troubles—Atrocities, Rules of Engagement, and Personal Response—'Friendly on Friendly'
The Challenge to Authority: Race, Drugs, Indiscipline—'Fragging' and Operation Freeze
Training and Morale-Building—Cohesion or Disintegration?

A Time of Troubles

For III MAF, the last year and a half of ground operations in Vietnam was a time of troubles. The decline in combat, combined with increasingly critical public and mass media scrutiny of the military actions of all Services, brought into prominence two long-standing and distressing problems: the protection of noncombatants in a battle fought among and for control of the people, and the prevention of accidental killing and wounding of Marines by their own fire. These problems lent themselves to the traditional military solutions of intensified training and rigorous enforcement of operating procedures, rules of engagement, and the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

More complex and difficult to deal with were the manifestations among Marines of the racial upheaval, antiwar dissent, and generational conflict plaguing American society in the early 1970s. These manifestations added up to a many-faceted challenge to command authority. Black militancy, expressed in forms ranging from haircuts and hand signs to mass confrontations and assaults, set Marine against Marine. The youth drug culture, imported from the United States, found fertile soil in Vietnam, where cheap narcotics abounded. Political dissent, encouraged and sometimes organized by a militant segment of the antiwar movement, raised the threat of mass disobedience of orders. All these forms of discontent merged into a general attitude of resentment and suspicion toward authority among many enlisted Marines, an attitude that occasionally erupted in deliberate attempts to murder officers and NCOs, the heinous crime known by the slang term, "fragging." Of this turbulent period, Sergeant Major Edgar R. Huff, Sergeant Major of III MAF, later observed: "If I were asked to sum up the 'Marine Experience' in Vietnam, I would say that the Corps grew far too fast and that this growth had a devastating impact on our leadership training and combat effectiveness.*[1]

III MAF, following general Marine Corps policy, adopted two main lines of approach to its disciplinary problems. On one hand, III MAF reemphasized traditional Marine values of pride in country and Corps, discipline, and loyalty to unit and comrades, while displaying the determination to punish gross violations of orders and regulations. The Marine Corps used existing legal and administrative procedures to purge its ranks of the most persistent offenders. On the other hand, III MAF tried to understand and make allowances for the pride and resentment of young Black Marines, sought ways to prevent drug abuse by education, and sponsored efforts to find common ground between a tradition-minded leadership and an often antitraditional rank and file. Although most Marines recognized that unrest was largely confined to the rear areas, where leadership is often put to its severest test, they also found that the problems were widespread and not amenable to simple or fast solutions. The balance between established, still valid standards of military discipline and professional conduct and accommodation to irreversible social and cultural change was not easy to find. That search was still under way as the last Marines of the 3d MAB left Vietnam.

Atrocities, Rules of Engagement, and Personal Response

On the evening of 19 February 1970, Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, operating in the Viet Cong-dominated countryside south of FSB Ross, sent out a five-man roving patrol.[2] Called a "killer team," the patrol had the mission of setting ambushes near the many pro-VC hamlets in the Que Son Valley to catch enemy troops or underground members moving in and out. Of the members of the team, Lance Corporal Randell D. Herrod, the leader, had been in Vietnam for seven months; PFC Thomas R. Boyd, Jr., had spent six months in the war, and Private Michael A. Schwartz, three months. The remaining two patrol members, PFCs Samuel G. Green and Michael S.

*Sergeant Major Huff had the unique experience of twice having been the senior enlisted man in III MAF. Towards the end of his first tour in Vietnam (1967-1968) during which he was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart Medals, he served as Sergeant Major, III MAF. In 1970-71, he was again Sergeant Major, III MAF and took part in the headquarters withdrawal from Vietnam. Henry I. Shaw, Jr. and Ralph W. Donnelly, *Blacks in the Marine Corps* (Washington: MCHC, 1979), pp. 79-80.

Krichten, had been in Vietnam only a month. None of these Marines, except Herrod, was considered proficient in night patrolling, although all had volunteered for the mission. Herrod, recently transferred from the 3d Marine Division, was awaiting court-martial for unauthorized absence. He was acting as team leader on this occasion because better qualified men were fatigued by days of continual combat.

January and February 1970 had been difficult months for Company B. The company had helped defend FSB Ross against the 6 January sapper attack. On 12 February, Company B had nine Marines killed in a well-executed enemy ambush. Weeks of day and night operations had brought the men close to exhaustion, and boobytrap casualties had compounded anger and frustration at the 12 February losses. The company commander, First Lieutenant Louis R. Ambort, a 23-year-old from Little Rock, Arkansas, reflected the tension in the unit in his instructions to Herrod's patrol. Ambort, according to subsequent accounts, exhorted his men to "get some damned gooks tonight" and avenge the company's casualties. He gave the impression that age, sex, and military status were not to be taken into account, although the platoon sergeant made a point of warning Herrod before the patrol went out that the lieutenant really meant only enemy soldiers.

In the field, the "killer team" moved to the small hamlet of Son Thang (4),* about two miles southwest of Ross, inhabited by a group of known Viet Cong families. The people in Son Thang had refused both American and GVN offers of relocation to a safer area, preferring to stay near where their men were fighting. Under the rules of engagement for this area, night patrols could enter such hamlets to search for VC; this night, Herrod's team entered Son Thang (4). The Marines went to a hut and called out the occupants, all women and children. One woman broke for a nearby treeline. The Marines shot her and then, allegedly at Herrod's command, gunned down the others. They went on to two more huts, ordered the inhabitants of each to come outside, and cut them down with small arms fire. In all, 16 Vietnamese—five women and 11 children—died that night in Son Thang (4).

Returning to the company position, the patrol reported a fight with 15-20 armed Viet Cong and claimed to have killed six.[3] Lieutenant Ambort passed the report on to battalion and regiment. The next morning, another 1st Battalion patrol, acting on a report from Vietnamese civilians, found the bodies in Son Thang (4). When battalion headquarters challenged Ambort's initial report, the lieutenant at first stuck by it and produced an SKS, actually taken some time before, as a weapon captured in the nonexistent fight. Later, he admitted that he had made a false action report. Information on the incident moved rapidly up the division chain of command. On 20 February, Major General Wheeler, the 1st Marine Division commander, reported to III MAF that a "possible serious incident" had occurred, involving elements of Company B and the civilians of Son Thang (4).[4]

The Son Thang (4) incident was not the first of its kind in the Vietnam conflict. In fact, in most earlier counterguerrilla campaigns, conducted by the United States and other western and nonwestern nations, the butchery at the small hamlet would not have been viewed as unique. Even in the conventional and relatively gentlemanly American Civil War, Union commanders summarily shot and hanged rebel bushwackers, burned towns and farms, and threatened retaliation against civilians for irregular acts of resistance. During his 1864 march through Georgia, General William T. Sherman ordered Confederate prisoners driven ahead of one of his columns to find or detonate enemy road mines. In the Philippines in 1901, Marine Lieutenant Colonel Littleton W. T. Waller was court-martialed for directing the execution of 11 treacherous native guides.* Brutality charges, some of them valid, marred the pre-World War II Marine occupation of Haiti, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic.[5] In Vietnam, such cruelties were no part of American policy. Nevertheless, the fear, rage, and frustration of battle against an evasive enemy, compounded often by deficient unit training and leadership, by individual personality defects, and by racial and cultural prejudice, led to isolated incidents of murder or abuse of prisoners and civilians and mutilation of enemy dead.

*On American maps, this hamlet was named Thang Tay (1) and this name appeared in initial dispatches. Later everyone substituted Son Thang (4), which was the hamlet name used by Que Son District authorities.

*Waller was acquitted. The entire court-martial, convened by the Army, later was ruled invalid, as Waller's Marines had not been formally assigned to Army command when the incident occurred.

Battlefield abuses and "war crimes"* had become a major public issue in the United States by the time Herrod's patrol entered Son Thang (4). The furor stemmed from revelation of the My Lai incident of 16 March 1968, in which Americal Division soldiers had shot several hundred unresisting Vietnamese noncombatants in Quang Ngai Province. Evidence that Americal Division commanders and staffs had falsified reports and suppressed investigation of this crime further disturbed political leaders and ordinary citizens alike. By early 1970, 16 Army officers—including First Lieutenant William L. Calley, Jr., whose platoon was involved in the My Lai shooting—and nine enlisted men were awaiting court-martial on charges related to the massacre. A special Army investigating team headed by Lieutenant General William R. Peers, USA, was examining the allegations of a coverup and soon would confirm its occurrence. Peer's findings would ruin the careers of 14 senior officers, including Major General Samuel W. Koster, former Americal Division commander. Congress had begun its own My Lai investigation.

Since mid-1965, when Marine riflemen first moved out into the countryside around Da Nang, III MAF commanders had attempted to enforce discrimination in the use of firepower and ensure firm but compassionate treatment of Vietnamese civilians. Television coverage of Company D, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines' assault on the village of Cam Ne, a VC stronghold, in which civilians' huts were allegedly burned indiscriminately in August 1965 dramatized both the military and the public relations importance of this problem.** In combat amid heavily populated hamlets, against an enemy who used the people to conceal and shield him, commanders often found it difficult to distinguish between a deliberate atrocity and the accidental result of misjudgement by troops under fire. Nevertheless, when clearcut battlefield crimes occurred, III MAF charged and court-martialed the offenders and reported the facts to superior headquarters. To the extent appropriate, the command informed the press about pending cases and their disposition. From 1965 to 1971, 27 Marines who served in Vietnam were convicted of the offense of murder in cases in which the victim was Vietnamese.*[6]

III MAF's response to the Son Thang (4) incident followed this established pattern. Brigadier General Leo J. Dulacki, then III MAF Chief of Staff, recalled that Son Thang, while not on the scale of My Lai, "was still a despicable atrocity, and there was concern that it would be blown up to the proportions of My Lai regardless of how III MAF handled the incident." Dulacki said, "disappointedly," that at the lower levels in the early stages of the investigation there were signs that the atrocity should be "hushed up." Nevertheless, the command "handled the case according to law and out in the open."[7]

III MAF passed the earlier 1st Marine Division serious incident report through III MAF on to Headquarters Marine Corps. The Commandant, General Chapman, closely followed the case. He instructed the 1st Marine Division which had responsibility for investigating and if necessary courtmartialing offenders, to report developments to Headquarters daily through FMFPac.** These daily reports continued until 6 March. Eventually, to facilitate the conduct of trials, the division, with FMFPac concurrence, declassified all its messages concerning the investigation. Throughout, III MAF kept the news media fully informed. Reviewing the incident years later, General Dulacki said that in the early stages of the legal process the press showed little interest, "in fact, one of the earliest press reports emanating from Vietnam complimented the Marine Corps for the forthright and candid manner" in which "it handled the case, making favorable comparisons with My Lai. It wasn't until much later, as a result of the political maneuvering

*War crimes are defined by a number of international agreements, including the Hague and Geneva conventions and the precedents developed in the post-World War II Nuremburg and Tokyo trials of Axis leaders. Most provisions of these codes affecting the actions of individual soldiers on the battlefield are embodied in the manuals and rules of engagement of the United Armed Services and in the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), and battlefield offenses are charged as violations of the UCMJ in accordance with policy which preceded the Vietnam war. U.S. Army Field Manual FM 27-10, *The Law of Land Warfare* (1956), para 507b. Sydney D. Bailey, *Prohibitions and Restraints in War* (New York: Oxford United Press, 1972.).

**For details of the Cam Ne incident, see Jack Shulimson and Maj Charles M. Johnson, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam 1965: The Landing and the Buildup* (Washington: MCHC, 1978), pp. 61-64.

*Moreover, 16 Marines were convicted of rape, while 15 were convicted of manslaughter. Few of these offenses were committed in the heat of battle. For example, in *U.S. v Stamats*, NMC 70-3765, and *U.S. v. Sikorski*, NMC 70-3578, the victim of manslaughter was a South Vietnamese soldier who was a drug pusher. Maj W. Hayes Parks, Head, Law of War Branch, International Law Division, ltr to Col John E. Greenwood, dtd 30May79.

**Marine Corps Order 5830.4, dtd 30Apr70, established this as standard reporting procedure for commands investigating misconduct by their personnel which led to damage to lives and property of foreign nationals.

on behalf of certain parties to the case, that it became somewhat of a *cause celebre*."[8]

After an informal investigation, Lieutenant Colonel Charles G. Cooper, the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines commander, on 23 February removed Lieutenant Ambort from command of Company B. The following day, the battalion convened a formal pretrial investigation under Article 32 of the UCMJ,* and charged the five members of the patrol with murder. At the same time, the office of the Division Staff Judge Advocate appointed an investigating officer and furnished military lawyers as counsel for both the government and the defendants.[9]

Reports of the charges in the American press provoked letters of protest to Marine Corps Headquarters. Most of the letter writers questioned the justice of prosecuting young men for doing the killing they had been trained and sent to do. The protestors also stressed the emotional pressures of counterguerrilla operations as mitigating circumstances for the Marines' offense. Replying to these letters, Headquarters spokesmen carefully avoided comment on the facts of the Son Thang case, but they declared as a general principle:

> There is no denying that the ordeal of combat puts extreme pressures on the Marines fighting in Vietnam. However, the Marine Corps is fighting in Vietnam in the name of a nation which requires certain standards of civilized conduct to be maintained even under the trying circumstances of combat. Those standards do not permit the intentional killing of persons, such as civilians or prisoners of war, who are not actually participating in combat. When there is an allegation that such an event has occurred appropriate action must be taken in accordance with the law.[10]

The Article 32 investigation began on 12 March and continued until the 23d. As a result of it, Major General Widdecke, who had replaced the injured Wheeler as 1st Marine Division commander, on 15 May referred four of the patrol members to trial by general courtmartial, Lance Corporal Herrod and Private Schwartz on charges of premeditated murder and PFCs Green and Boyd on charges of unpremeditated murder. The division dropped charges against Kritchen, who had agreed to testify for the prosecution. After a separate investigation, General Widdecke imposed nonjudicial punishment on Lieutenant Ambort for making a false official report. Punishment consisted of a letter of reprimand and the forfeiture of $250 pay for each of two months.

Trials of the four murder defendants began in June with that of Schwartz, and ended on 30 August with the verdict on Herrod. Herrod and Boyd retained civilian attorneys, while Schwartz and Green were represented by military defense counsel. Legal maneuvers by the defense in the Federal courts, inquiries by the defendants' Congressmen, and charges of brig brutality toward Green—the only black among the accused—complicated the proceedings. The results of the trials were mixed. Military courts found Schwartz guilty on 12 of 16 counts of premeditated murder and Green guilty on 15 of 16 counts of unpremeditated murder. Schwartz and Green received sentences respectively of life and five years at hard labor;* in addition, both were sentenced to forfeiture of all pay and allowances and dishonorable discharge. Boyd was tried, at his own request, before a military judge sitting alone and won acquittal on all charges. In the final Son Thang (4) trial, a full military court acquitted Herrod after a vigorous defense conducted by two state senators from Oklahoma, Herrod's home state. On 15 December 1970, Major General Widdecke reduced the prison terms of Schwartz and Green, both of whom had been moved from Da Nang to the Camp Pendleton brig, to one year each but let stand the rest of their sentences. The varied results of the trials brought some press and Congressional protest and even ridicule, but the Marine Corps had allowed the legal system to work without manipulation; and it had been willing to acknowledge and attempt to punish wrongdoing by its own men.[11]

Most civilian casualties resulted from errors of judgement in combat or misdirected fire, not deliberate murderous intent. In the short, sharp firefights in or

*Such an investigation is required whenever preliminary evaluation of facts pertaining to a crime or charge indicates that a general courtmartial may be recommended. During the pretrial investigation, the accused may be represented by counsel and may present witnesses or cross-examine those called by the convening authority. The hearings are transcribed, and the investigating officer makes recommendations to the convening commander as to disposition of the case, in this instance to the Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines. If a general courtmartial is recommended, the findings go for review and approval to the higher commander with general courtmartial convening authority, in this case to the Commanding General, 1st Marine Division. 1st MarDivO P5800.1B, dtd 5Feb70, Tab B-6, 1st MarDiv ComdC, Feb70, prescribes in detail procedures for the Article 32 investigation, as well as other aspects of division legal procedures.

*The maximum penalty for premeditated murder under UCMJ was death, but General Widdecke had directed that the case be tried as noncapital, which made the maximum punishment life imprisonment.

near hamlets that characterized the war in Quang Nam, it was all too easy for women, children, or old people to be hit by stray bullets and grenades. Keyed up Marines in night ambushes found the impulse to fire at any moving figure difficult to resist, even though the moving figure could be a child violating curfew rather than an attacking Viet Cong. Employment of air strikes and artillery fire, necessary to hold down Marine casualties, could also kill and maim large numbers of noncombatants. On 15 April 1970, for instance, Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines engaged enemy troops near Le Bac (2), about five miles northeast of An Hoa. The company called in jets and Cobra gunships; a dozen enemy troops died in the action, but so did about 30 people in the nearby hamlet.*[12]

In an effort to avoid such tragedies, MACV and its subordinate commands, including III MAF, early in the war had issued elaborate rules of engagement (ROE), prescribing procedures for employing all types of weapons and for humane treatment of prisoners and noncombatants. All commands were supposed to train and retrain their troops in these procedures and principles. The 1st Marine Division, in an order issued in March 1968 and still in effect in 1970, required its subordinate units to include ROE instruction in the initial orientation of newly arriving troops and to provide refresher training in this subject to each Marine every two months during his Vietnam tour. The division syllabus, based on the MACV ROE, emphasized employment in all situations of the minimum force required for self-protection or mission accomplishment and enjoined "patient and compassionate" treatment of Vietnamese civilians.[13]

The public uproar in the United States over My Lai led to new command interest in enforcing the ROE and the laws of war, especially after the Army investigation of the massacre cited lax or nonexistent instruction in these subjects as a contributing cause.** In the 1st Marine Division, according to Major General Widdecke, concern over the legal, moral, and tactical implications of My Lai created "an atmosphere of uncertainty" among newly arrived lieutenants. "This uncertainty," Widdecke reported on 28 April to General McCutcheon, "is illustrated by a question often asked during advanced indoctrination training, 'What is an atrocity?'" An increased division concern over civilian casualties, Widdecke continued, "impacts directly both on planning and on clearances for fire missions; and may result in targets not attacked for lack of positive identification on the remote possibility of injury to noncombatants."[14]

On 13 May 1970, Lieutenant General McCutcheon, responding to the Son Thang (4) and other incidents, sent a message to all III MAF unit commanders. In it, he emphasized that "It is imperative that measures to preserve the lives and property of noncombatants receive constant command attention." McCutcheon directed all commanders to review the rules of engagement and "ensure strict compliance with their provisions." He concluded by repeating: "Continuing command attention is mandatory."[15]

Whatever the degree of command effort and effectiveness in carrying out these instructions, it was difficult to translate the principles of the ROE into terms meaningful to the individual Marine on patrol or in ambush. The 4th Combined Action Group, located in Quang Tri Province, made a determined attempt to do this. On 16 May 1970, the group instituted a new ROE instruction program for all its Marines and corpsmen. Instruction was based on 19 specific tactical questions and answers, most of which emphasized the need to identify targets before opening fire. The tactical catechism, which was to be considered "directive in nature," included such questions as:

> *Q. While in ambush position, you see a human figure at 200 meters moving toward you. The figure appears to be armed, but cannot be further identified. Should you shoot?*
>
> A. No. Wait for the target to get closer, and make use of the starlight scope to identify the target. Only when you are reasonably sure the target is enemy may you shoot. If need be, when the target is at its closest point, use a challenge or illumination in an effort to identify the target.
>
> *Q. While in an ambush position, an unarmed person wearing civilian clothes walks into the killing zone. Should you shoot him?*
>
> A. No. This is probably just a curfew violatot. Curfew violators do not rate being shot. Curfew violators should be halted by a challenge and apprehended, preferably by a PF.

*The 1st Marine Division launched an investigation of this incident, after civilians reported it to the OP on Hill 119. Viet Cong radio broadcasts in May claimed Le Bac (2) had been another My Lai-style massacre; the 1st Marine Division established, however, that the civilian casualties had been caused by the air strikes, not by small arms fire.

**In the years immediately after the Vietnam War, all the Services, under DOD direction, improved the amount and quality of the training of their personnel in the basic laws of war and in the procedure for reporting war crimes by both United States and enemy forces. For a brief survey of these efforts, see Maj W. Hays Parks, "Crimes in Hostilities," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Jul- and Aug76, *passim*.

Q. Two armed enemy soldiers are spotted talking to some civilians next to some inhabited hooches. The range is 150 meters. Should you shoot?

A. You may not shoot until the enemy move so that the civilians are out of the line of fire. If you are lucky, this will happen and you will get your kill. In terms of winning the war in your area, it is better to let some VC get away than it is to kill some civilians along with them.

On the more aggressive side, the questionnaire pointed out that, if troops came under fire from huts, or from an enemy force with huts in the line of fire, the Marines could shoot back. "Use proper care, but if you happen to hit some civilians you will not be held at fault."[16]

Efforts to limit civilian casualties continued until the end of Marine ground combat. The reduction in intelligence and preemptive artillery fire missions during September-October 1970 had this as one of its objectives. Early in 1971, the 1st Marine Division began attaching liaison officers from the appropriate districts to the Marine headquarters controlling major operations in populated areas. The Vietnamese officers, presumably familiar with their areas of responsibility, were at once to expedite political clearance of supporting fire and to keep such fire away from places inhabited by noncombatants. The division directive announcing this program again exhorted regimental and battalion commanders to "continue to emphasize the importance of minimizing noncombatant casualties," and instructed them to "exercise caution in employing supporting arms near areas where noncombatants are located."[17]

Besides trying to enforce the rules of engagement, III MAF attempted to improve the individual Marine's attitude toward the South Vietnamese people. Marine commanders had realized early in the war that ignorance, fear, prejudice, and hatred contributed not only to major battlefield crimes but also to innumerable minor insults and violations of personal rights which could turn potential Vietnamese friends into enemies. To instill favorable attitudes in Marines toward their allies, III MAF during 1966 had instituted the Personal Response Program. Administered by the G-5 and S-5 staff sections in close cooperation with command and unit chaplains,* the program was designed to enhance the individual Marine's understanding and appreciation of Vietnamese culture, traditions, religions, and customs. A Marine so trained, it was hoped, would recognize that a Vietnamese, while different from himself in many ways, was nevertheless a fellow human being whose behavior made sense in terms of his own values and whose rights deserved respect.

Throughout 1970-1971, personal response activity continued at all command levels. The III MAF personal response officer, a member of the G-5 section, presented monthly briefings at the Combined Action Force School and at other Da Nang area Marine, Army, and Air Force commands. The MAF personal response staff also prepared instructional materials on special topics, for instance Tet holiday traditions. At the request of units, the section conducted attitude surveys of Vietnamese residents and employees, to determine their response to American actions and identify points of conflict. Guides from the section took Marines on tours of religious shrines and museums in Da Nang.[18]

The 1st Marine Division G-5 Personal Response Section carried on what it described as "a multifaceted effort aimed at improving the attitude of the individual Marine toward the Vietnamese people." A division personal response contact team traveled from unit to unit, to present classes in "Attitude Improvement," Vietnamese history and culture, and the Vietnamese language. The division, like III MAF, sponsored cultural guided tours of Da Nang.* Each regiment and separate battalion was required to conduct its own personal response program, centered on an "Attitude Improvement" orientation lecture by the chaplain for all newly-arrived Marines. Units supplemented this initial training with whatever other activities the commanding officers deemed appropriate, using their own resources and the division contact team. Unit commanders had to report quarterly to the Division G-5 on subjects covered, hours of instruction, and total numbers of Marines involved. In addition, some units established personal response councils, to determine troop reaction to the program and report to the commander on particular problems in dealing with the local people.[19]

Marine commands at times went to great lengths to placate offended Vietnamese. On 24 April 1970, elements of Headquarters Company, 1st Marines made a search of Khanh Son hamlet, a more or less friendly

*Navy chaplains attached to III MAF had done much to originate and develop the Personal Response Program, but by 1970 disagreement existed among chaplains as to whether involvement with what was in many respects a military program compromised their religious mission. For details of the controversy, see Cdr Herbert J. Bergsma, CHC, USN, *Chaplains with Marines in Vietnam, 1962-1971* (Washington: MCHC, 1985), pp. 183-85, hereafter Bergsma, *Chaplains with Marines in Vietnam*.

*During most of this period, Da Nang City, and most other Vietnamese civilian communities, were "off-limits" to Marines at all times, unless on particular military missions.

community close to the division CP. The Marines, assisted by a counterintelligence team, officers of the Vietnamese national police Special Branch, and two ARVN interpreters, acted on a report that a VC reconnaissance squad was in the hamlet, which was also a suspected center of drug traffic, black marketeering, and prostitution. In the course of an otherwise uneventful and unproductive operation, medical corpsmen with the Marines drew blood samples from 13 women and gave them penicillin shots on suspicion that they were diseased prostitutes.

The hamlet residents and their chief viewed this action as an insult and protested to the Hoa Vang District Chief. Rumors spread that the Americans were taking Vietnamese blood for transfusions for Americans casualties. The district chief transmitted the protest to Colonel Edward A. Wilcox, the 1st Marines commander on 12 May. Three days later, Colonel Wilcox, the district chief, and other officials met with the protestors at the Khanh Son hamlet council station. Colonel Wilcox expressed "official regrets" and "apologized" for the forced medical treatment and assured the people that it would not be repeated. His remarks satisfied the villagers concerning the Marines' part in the incident, but the Vietnamese still demanded a separate apology from the ARVN interpreters. The 1st Marine Division then made its own investigation of the affair. In August, on the basis of the findings, Major General Widdecke sent letters of caution to the previous division G-2 and the 1st Marines regimental surgeon, and a formal letter of admonition to the assistant S-2 of the 1st Marines, for failing to follow prescribed procedures in planning and conducting the search.[20]

The effectiveness of these measures in improving the attitudes of Marines and Vietnamese toward each other is impossible to measure. To the end, probably, dislike or distrust, tempered by wary tolerance dictated by self-interest, were the dominant sentiments on both sides. Tension was constant and violence never far below the surface as the Marines redeployed, but III MAF never gave up the effort to maintain a measure of humanity and compassion in the conduct of an often savage war. How much worse the situation might have been had the command not made the effort, the tragedy at Son Thang (4) clearly indicated.

'Friendly on Friendly'

As enemy contact diminished during 1970-1971, the Marine casualty rate from what was graphically labelled "friendly on friendly" fire incidents took a heavy toll of Marines. In a single bad month, August 1970, the 1st Marine Division lost nine men killed and 37 wounded by their own fire, as opposed to 18 killed and 140 wounded by the enemy. Throughout 1970, misdirected supporting arms, mostly artillery accounted for 10 Marines dead and 157 injured, the equivalent of a rifle company put out of action. "Intramural fire fights" between small infantry units resulted in 20 Marines killed and 89 wounded. Firearms and ordnance accidents took another 32 lives and injured 298 Marines, enough men for two more rifle companies.[21]

In a particularly serious incident on 17 August 1970, Company M, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines shelled itself with its own 60mm mortars, losing four Marines and a Viet Cong woman prisoner killed and 28 Marines wounded.[22] During a counterrocket artillery fire mission on 12 October, a 100 mil error in elevation brought 34 rounds from a Marine battery down on Hieu Duc District Headquarters west of Da Nang. The accidental shelling killed a U.S. Army major and a Popular Force soldier and wounded five American soldiers and a PF. Misaimed rounds from this mission hit Hill 10, injuring three Marines.[23] Early in November, a reconnaissance team in the mountains northwest of Da Nang called a fire mission on moving troops they thought were enemy. Three men from Company I, 3d Battalion, 1st Marines died in the ensuing barrage and four were wounded. The patrol's route into the reconnaissance team's AO had not been plotted at the FSCC.[24]

"Friendly on friendlies" had a number of causes. The small-unit saturation patrolling fundamental to pacification and counterrocket tactics entailed a high but necessary risk of accidents. Major John S. Grinalds, 1st Marines S-2, explained:

> The dilemma we had was, do we drive the squads and ambushes close enough to each other so that the VC are denied the time and the distance to move in their rockets and set them up and fire them and also run the risk of "friendly on friendlies?" Or do we hang back and reduce the risk of "friendly on friendlies" and let . . . chance take its course so far as firing the rockets?
>
> We elected to drive the squads and patrols close to each other and it just took pretty tight coordination to try and prevent any incidents. In the main we were successful . . .[25]

The strain of continued enemy contact was also conducive to accidental shootings. According to Colonel Theodore E. Metzger, commander of the Combined Action Force, most "friendly on friendlies" among his troops "happened in CAPs where they've been in contact . . . for about two months, steady contact, heavy

contact . . . . You get jumpy, as you well know, and I think this is a good part [of the problem]."[26]

While tactics and the combat situations were contributory causes, the overwhelming majority of incidents resulted from carelessness and from what Major General Widdecke called "an ignorance or lack of application of basic military fundamentals." Small infantry units often collided inadvertently because of map-reading and land navigation errors. Forward observers and fire support coordination center personnel transmitted incorrect map coordinates, and FSCCs sometimes did not follow prescribed fire mission clearance procedures. Gun crews set fuses improperly, selected wrong powder charges, or misaimed their guns. Carelessness was almost the sole cause of the large number of firearms and ordnance accidents in rear areas. In the 1st Marine Division, the .45 caliber pistol, the M16 rifle, and the various grenade types were major casualty-producers in the hands of Marines disregarding established safety procedures or "skylarking with the weapon." Brigadier General Simmons, 1st Marine Division ADC, declared: "Forty percent of these cases were caused by .45 caliber pistols, failure to inspect, and a round in the chamber when it wasn't authorized."[27]

Marine commanders relied primarily on continuous and intensive training to reduce "friendly on friendlies." The infantry regiments regularly included such subjects as forward observer procedures, map reading, and land navigation in their troop orientation and refresher training. They also conducted firearms and ordnance safety programs, supervised by the division inspector. Beginning in mid-1969, the 11th Marines cooperated closely with the infantry regiments to improve artillery fire control. The artillery regiment tried to ensure precision in its own operations at every stage, from the fire direction center to the gun crew, by emphasizing exact adherence to procedures and thorough mastery of necessary skills. On 22 May 1970, the division convened the first in a series of quarterly friendly fire incident seminars. Chaired by the commander of the 11th Marines and with representation from all units using supporting arms, the seminars facilitated the exchange of information on accidents and methods of prevention.[28]

On 24 August 1970, in response to a series of friendly fire incidents, Major General Widdecke directed all 1st Marine Division regiments and separate battalions to instruct their men "repetitively" in map reading, land navigation "to include thorough orientation on immediate local terrain and emphasis on use of the compass," identification and challenge procedures, fire discipline, and the use and coordination of both organic and external supporting arms. He ordered regimental and battalion commanders to report to him by 1 September on their actions and plans for carrying out this training. He warned in conclusion: "I will hold every officer and Marine personally responsible for insuring the professional use of arms against the enemy rather than their destructive and counterproductive employment against our own Marines." Each friendly fire incident, Widdecke promised, "will be rigorously investigated to determine command responsibility and possible dereliction." This order produced no radically new unit safety programs, but regiments and battalions continued to include the subjects Widdecke specified in their regular training schedule.[29]

To reduce accidental shootings and explosions in rear areas, III MAF enforced a number of safety procedures. These included prohibition of borrowing or lending weapons and of chambering rounds unless "required by the tactical situation and so directed by competent authority or the individual is under enemy attack or attack is imminent." No Marine was to discharge a weapon unless cleared to do so by "competent authority" or "unless necessary for the protection of human life." Unless specifically directed to the contrary, Marines were not to enter cantonments, compounds, or buildings with rounds in the chamber of their weapons. Regulations forbade "horseplay or unauthorized handling" of arms and prohibited possession of weapons or ordnance not issued by proper authorities. All shoulder weapons were to be carried at sling arms "except in tactical situations at the option of the tactical commander."[30]

On 21 October 1970, in a strongly worded message, Lieutenant General McCutcheon enjoined strict enforcement of these regulations by all commands. He threatened criminal prosecution of violators and concluded:

> The basic job of a Marine is to bear and properly use his assigned weapon. Any violation of these procedures for weapons control by a Marine and/or his supervisors casts serious doubt as to the stability, maturity, dependability and responsibility of those involved and the right to bear the name Marine and any rank above private.[31]

Responding to McCutcheon's directive, the 1st Marine Division on 8 November promulgated a strict weapons-safety SOP. It provided for frequent inspec-

tion of weapons in the hands of troops, tight control of the issue of grenades and other ordnance, frequent inspection of working and living areas for contraband arms and explosives, and, where possible, supervised cleaning of all weapons. Commanders in secure rear areas could withhold even the issue of small arms ammunition, unless needed for guard or other duty. On 6 January 1971, the division restricted issue of the .45 caliber pistol, a major instrument of accidents, to men whose jobs actually required it. The division authorized commanders to withdraw .45s from men who did not need them even if they were entitled to pistols under the table of equipment. Commanders were to rearm such individuals with M16s and make sure they received thorough safety instruction on that weapon.[32]

As a result of these command efforts, and of slackening combat and Marine redeployments, the total number of "friendly on friendly" casualties declined during 1970, and the incidence of some categories of accidents in relation to troop strength diminished. In 1969, the 1st Marine Division suffered an average of 34.9 friendly fire casualties per month; in 1970 it suffered 23 per month, and in the first months of 1971, 1.7. During 1969, the division had 0.5 supporting arms accidents per 1,000 men; it had 0.2 such incidents per thousand during 1970. The rate of individual weapon friendly fire mishaps, on the other hand, remained at a constant 0.4 per thousand in both 1969 and 1970. Grenade and other explosions increased in frequency, from 0.5 per thousand in 1969 to 0.7 per thousand in 1970. Accidental discharges declined from 0.7 incidents per thousand men to 0.5 per thousand. Clearly, the fatal combination of young men and deadly devices was far from neutralized.*[33]

The Challenge to Authority: Race, Drugs, Indiscipline

By 1970, all the Armed Services were confronting, to varying degrees, a deterioration of discipline. Riots and acts of sabotage occurred at Army bases and on Navy ships; a few small units in Vietnam refused *en masse* to advance into combat. In some strife-torn units in Vietnam officers faced the daily threat of assassination ("fragging") by their own men. Military personnel in the United States and overseas joined radical groups dedicated to ending the war and revolutionizing the Services. Drug abuse and minor defiance of regulations were widespread. Militant blacks set themselves apart by the use of "Black Power" symbols and rituals; they engaged in demonstrations and confrontations over alleged discrimination and occasionally attacked white officers and enlisted men.[34] This unrest in the military reflected the divisions within American society over Vietnam, race, and the conflict of generations, but it also showed the effects on the Services of the long war. Rapid manpower turnover, a decline in training standards and personnel quality, and bordeom and restlessness as combat action diminished all undermined discipline and morale. In addition, "the quality of some of our enlisted Marines was deficient in terms of education," said Sergeant Major Huff of III MAF. "They lacked seasoning and there was no time to train them properly. Black and white Marines who had these deficiencies were shoved into the front line units and this was the group that suffered the high casualty rates . . . ." As Huff, a black Marine, and others have noted, combat units in the field experienced far fewer difficulties:

> The fact that our line units performed with little of the racial problems seen in rear areas is a tribute to the officers and staff noncommissioned officers (NCOs) of those units. It is interesting to note that most of the black officers and NCOs were in line units. In my opinion, their presence there and the common bond they shared with their white counterparts helped sustain the combat effectiveness of those commands.[35]

In the six years of large-scale Marine Corps participation in the war, 730,000 men passed through the ranks of a Corps that had a peak strength of 317,000.* This meant, according to Major General Edwin B. Wheeler, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1 at HQMC, that "We have turned over an average of half the Marine Corps each year for the past six years."[36] Only 46,500 officers and enlisted men remained on duty continuously during that period. Compounding the problem, 50 to 60 percent of the one-term Marines had enlisted for only two years. Their Marine experience consisted of initial training, a Vietnam tour, and return to the United States for a short time before discharge.

*These figures do not include "occupational and operational incidents" (for example, falls, burns, and drownings) and automobile accidents, both of which took a toll of Marines. The occupational incident rate in the division rose from 3.2 per thousand in 1970, although actual losses dropped slightly from 21 killed and 1,020 injured to 21 killed and 961 injured. The vehicle accident rate remained about constant, at 0.7 per thousand in 1969 and 0.6 per thousand the following year. Twelve Marines were killed and 120 hurt in accidents in 1969; three were killed and 94 injured in 1970. 1st MarDiv G-1 Summary, dtd 31Mar71, in 1st MarDiv Command Information Notebook, dtd 10Apr71, 1st MarDivDocs.

*In contrast, during World War II, the Marine Corps, with a maximum strength of 485,000, passed 600,000 men through its ranks.

Inevitably, these Marines lacked the seasoning and Marine Corps indoctrination afforded by longer service. Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, ADC of the 1st Marine Division, pointed out that the Marine arriving in Vietnam in 1971 "was probably only 13, 14, or 16 years old when this thing . . . began . . . . So he grew up in a different high school environment than his predecessor did, five or six years ago, and he brought many of the attitudes of that environment into the Marine Corps with him." Those attitudes included acceptance of drugs and, for many blacks, racial militancy.[37]

For III MAF Marines, circumstances in Vietnam compounded tensions and conflicts imported from the United States. As the Marines' part in the war diminished, more and more men, especially in support units, operating in the secure rear areas, found extra time on their hands and few places except overcrowded clubs in which to spend it. Boredom led to excessive drinking, drug use, and fights, often fights between blacks and whites. In combat, continuous small-unit activities were at once dangerous and seemingly devoid of measurable success. General Dulacki, then Chief of Staff, III MAF later observed:

> The complex nature of the war and the tediousness of the day-to-day job of some Marines in Vietnam created frustrations. It was frustrating to the commanders who sought and expected to achieve readily and visibly successful results from their multifaceted operational efforts. It was so different from other wars. And it took time for each new arrival to learn that it was different. At times it appeared to sap the souls and the spirit of the men.[39]

In many III MAF cantonments, poor living conditions contributed to troop discontent. Housing, improvised at best, had deteriorated; with redeployment in prospect, few resources were available for rehabilitation. Lieutenant Colonel William R. Fails, MAG-16 S-4, described the living areas at Marble Mountain as "squalid." "The density," he recalled:

> was almost intolerable . . . . The enlisted men's area . . . had been strong-backed tents and now [they] had tin roofs on them. They were probably three or four feet apart, with 15 or 20 men living in each little hut . . . . There were literally acres of them . . . . As a unit withdrew, if we had the opportunity, and we found many opportunities, we would simply knock those sheds down to give them some daylight, air to breathe.[40]

Above all, the prospect of redeployment itself undermined morale and discipline. Men found it difficult to maintain a sense of purpose in a war that was ending without decisive results. In MAG-16, according to Fails, "the typical reaction could go one of two ways. Either, 'I've only got a few more months or weeks to earn all my medals, so I can be a hero,' or the opposite: 'I'm not going to be the last one shot down.'"[41]

Of all the manifestations of the breakdown of military cohesion, black militancy was potentially the most disruptive and, for many white Marines, the most difficult to understand. In 1969, a sociologist concluded in a study of Army enlisted men: "military life is characterized by an interracial egalitarianism of a quantity and of a kind that is seldom found in the other major institutions of American society."[42] This statement appeared to apply as well to the Marine Corps. During the late 1960s, blacks made up about 10 percent of Marine strength.* Black and white Marines worked and lived together in integrated units; all military specialties were open to Marines of every race; formal discrimination in promotions, assignments, and military justice was forbidden; black officers and NCOs led white troops; on-base housing and recreation facilities were completely desegregated. In Vietnam, black Marines participated in all aspects of the war effort. Five earned the Medal of Honor; countless others won Navy Crosses, Silver Stars, and lesser decorations. To the senior black Marines, who recalled the segregated World War II Corps, it seemed that blacks had become fullfledged members of the Marine "family."

Nevertheless, racial tension and potential conflict existed within the integrated Marine Corps as in all

*The Marines first enlisted substantial numbers of blacks in World War II in segregated defense battalions and ammunition and depot companies. Integration came, as for the other Services, in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Integrated Marine units were the rule in the Korean War. See Shaw and Donnelly, *Blacks in the Marine Corps*, *passim*.

the Services. While blacks and whites mingled on the job, they usually resegregated themselves off duty. Many liberty areas near Marine bases had *de facto* white and black sections, which members of the wrong race entered at their own peril. In spite of the abolition of formal discrimination in duty assignments, relatively few black recruits possessed the educational and social advantages to qualify for the more highly technical military specialties; hence, the number of black Marines in combat units and unskilled billets was out of proportion to their percentage of Marine strength. Among Marine officers, blacks were conspicuously underrepresented. In the 1st Marine Division, blacks made up 13 percent of total strength during 1970 but accounted for only 1.2 percent of officer strength.*[43] The Marine Corps still contained prejudiced whites, even after years of integration; their persecution of black Marines ranged from verbal insult to punitive abuse of the disciplinary and military justice systems. Blacks continued to encounter discrimination in off-base private housing and other facilities. They complained that military clubs and post exchanges rarely catered to their taste in music, food, and personal items.

Young blacks entering the Marine Corps in the late 1960s and early 1970s were not predisposed to accept these remaining real and imagined slights calmly. Years of civil rights agitation and progress had instilled in them a strong racial pride and an intolerance of even the appearance of second-class treatment. Many, especially those from lower-class urban backgrounds, had grown up distrusting all authority. Confronted with a largely white chain of command, they readily interpreted even legitimate decisions unfavorable to themselves as discriminatory. While most black Marines loyally did their duty and asked only for fair play, most also, to one degree or another, felt the new racial pride and expressed it with "Afro" haircuts, "Black Power" symbols and salutes, and requests for "soul" food in the messhalls and "soul" music in the clubs. They often congregated by race in living areas and on liberty. A minority of militants, loosely organized around a few aggressive, sometimes criminal, individuals, actively sought trouble. They carried the use of "Black Power" symbols to extremes and attempted to create or intensify racial grievances. The militants tried to form an alternative power structure to the chain of command and to this end used violence against nonconforming blacks as well as whites. Depending on the issue and the circumstances, the militants secured varying degrees of moderate black support.[44]

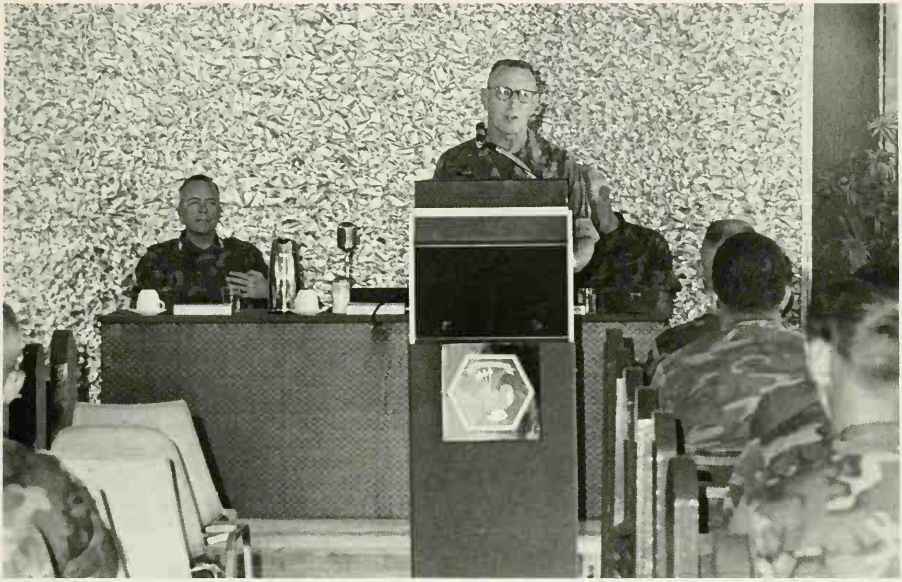
Black militancy and racial grievances proved an explosive mixture. Beginning in 1968, outbreaks of racial violence occurred at Marine bases around the world. Typically, trouble began with quarrels in enlisted men's clubs and recreational facilities and culminated in gangs of blacks roaming the base attacking white Marines. Less frequently, white gangs retaliated with assaults on blacks, or groups of up to 50 whites and blacks confronted each other. In the first eight months of 1969, Camp Lejeune reported 160 assaults, muggings, and robberies with racial overtones. The camp's troubles reached a climax on the night of 20 July 1969, when groups of blacks assaulted 15 white Marines, one of whom died. Similar racial flareups took place in Hawaii, Japan, and Okinawa. After a two-week tour of Marine commands in the Pacific and Southeast Asia, General Chapman declared: "There is no question about it . . . . We've got a problem."[45]

On 2 September 1969, General Chapman issued ALMAR 65, a directive to all Marines on "Race Relations and Instances of Racial Violence within the Marine Corps."[46] The Commandant began by declaring that acts of violence between Marines "cannot be tolerated and must stop," and that:

> It is now and has long been our policy in the Marine Corps that discrimination in any form is not tolerated. It had similarly been our policy that a fighting organization such as ours must have a solid foundation of firm, impartial discipline. It is in the context of these two basic policies that we must take measures to dispel the racial problems that currently exist.

Chapman instructed all Marine commanders to make "positive and overt efforts to eradicate every trace of discrimination, whether intentional or not, especially in promotions." He directed them to maintain full, frank, and open communication with all their troops on racial matters, so as to refute disruptive false rumors and prevent misinformation. Chapman urged all officers and NCOs to follow the established principles of Marine Corps leadership in combating racial strife, calling attention to the commander's role as teacher and guide to his men. In the most controversial portion of his directives, Chapman instructed commanders to permit wearing of the "Afro/Natural

*On the other hand, 12.2 percent of staff NCOs and 7.3 percent of NCOs in the division were black. In 1967, the black-white officer ratio in the Marine Corps was 1-150, as compared to 1-30 in the Army, 1-60 in the Air Force, and 1-300 in the Navy. Charles C. Moskos, Jr., *The American Enlisted Man: The Rank and File in Today's Military* (New York: The Russell Sage Foundation, 1970), ch. 5.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A194696

BGen James R. Jones, Commanding General, Force Logistic Command, introduces Gen Leonard C. Chapman, Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps, who will discuss the implications of ALMAR 65 about racial relations to the audience of junior officers at III MAF.

provided it conforms with current Marine Corps regulations." He forbade the making of "Black Power" salutes and the wearing of "Black Power" symbols at regular formations and in rendering military courtesy to the flag, the national anthem, and individual Marines but declared: "Individual signs between groups and individuals will be accepted for what they are—gestures of recognition and unity." While such actions should be "discouraged," they "are nevertheless expressions of individual belief and are not, in themselves, prohibited . . . . They are grounds for disciplinary action if executed during official ceremonies or in a manner suggesting direct defiance of duly constituted authority."

Chapman's conditional permission of "Afro" haircuts and "Black Power" signs drew criticism from many Marines, who argued that it constituted special privilege for a minority and was inherently divisive.[47] Others contended that ALMAR 65 simply recognized a division that already existed and offered a valid approach to overcoming it within Marine traditions and discipline. Lieutenant General William K. Jones, CGFMFPac, for example, defended the Commandant's action on haircuts, pointing out that "All he did was to restate what our regulations were all along. I have always been against the Marine officer or NCO who, because of his own personal values, would insist that a white sidewall is the only acceptable haircut."[48]

Besides issuing ALMAR 65, Headquarters Marine Corps during 1969 established an Equal Opportunities Branch and started a drive to recruit more black Marine officers. Progress in resolving racial conflict, however, was slow. In mid-1970, officers of a Reserve public affairs unit, in a study of Marine Corps race relations, concluded: "Compliance with ALMAR 65 varies greatly among . . . commands." The officers reported that the apparent softening toward black militancy had created a "backlash" among many white Marines and that other Marines—both black and white—refused to admit that a racial problem existed.[49] Nevertheless, ALMAR 65 had set the course along which III MAF tried to move in dealing with its own racial tensions.

During 1970, III MAF felt the effects of the gener-

al racial unrest. The 1st Marine Division alone reported 32 racial incidents* between January and October 1970: "5 group confrontations with authority, 3 organized petitions, 19 assaults, 2 intragroup dissents, and 3 fraggings." The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and Force Logistic Command also suffered outbreaks of violence, including a grenade attack on the FLC Maintenance Battalion enlisted men's club that killed one Marine and injured 62. Most incidents took the form of fights between small groups of Marines after an altercation in a club, or several-to-one assaults on individuals, with the attackers most often blacks. Whites occasionally attacked blacks, such as the FLC Marine who went after two black Marines and a black corpsman because, according to the incident report, he was "fed up with their racially oriented activities." On occasion, blacks fought other blacks, evidently in an effort to coerce or intimidate nonmilitants. Black Marines came forward to identify the black perpetrators of several attacks on whites. Almost all incidents occurred in cantonments and rear areas. Marines searching for the VC/NVA while on patrol in the rice paddies or mountains of the Da Nang TAOR, in contrast, were drawn together by the threat common to all which the enemy presented, and only rarely were disciplinary problems of any magnitude encountered.[50]

III MAF commanders attributed their racial troubles primarily to the general causes: black distrust of a white command; resentment of alleged inequities in promotion, assignments, and military justice; and the presence of black militants and white racists. Yet the Vietnam situation had its own effects on Marine racial tension. Especially at Chu Lai, where the Americal Division surrounded MAGs -12 and -13, Marine black militants drew reinforcements from the much larger Army black population. Lieutenant General McCutcheon recalled: "Some of the race . . . problems that we had, mainly crowd gathering, deliberations on the part of the black brothers in defense of themselves . . . nearly always could be traced to the fact that some Army blacks had infiltrated the area and sought out our militant blacks . . . ." McCutcheon added, however, that racial problems of the period reached far beyond the military domain: "They were not only big problems within the military in Vietnam, they were big problems, and in my opinion even bigger, within the civilian community back here in the United States."[51]

Enlisted clubs were a center of conflict, as military activity diminished and off-duty Marines crowded inadequate facilities. In MAG-13, according to Colonel Laurence J. Stien, the group commander, reductions in the fixed-wing sortie rate resulted in 2,000 men trying to use clubs built to accommodate 450. "If you dump these kids loose on a hot day," he reported, "they end up in the club system. And the clubs . . . are not made for things like this." If a traveling floor show were scheduled for an evening, men would go to the club early to secure seats and spend several hours drinking beer. Stien described the results:

> They won't even get up and go over and get a hamburger and get food in their stomach to absorb the alcohol they're consuming. They will not go to the mess hall because they want that seat. So by the time the show starts, you run up with a delicate situation. A lot of the young people, who cannot hold the alcohol they consume, . . . end up tipsy. And let somebody . . . , black or white, walk on somebody else's foot . . . , and the first thing you know you've built into an incident.[52]

Lack of information or misinformation contributed to racial tension, especially if it concerned a matter as vital to the individual Marine as redeployment eligibility. Colonel Robert L. Parnell, Jr., III MAF G-1, pointed out: "[If] you let 10 white engineer troops go home three months before five black engineer troops who came in at the same time . . . we ought to, for fundamental reasons as well as for racial relations, tell the troops why those 10 are going home earlier than those five."[53]

III MAF and its subordinate commands attacked the racial problem on the principles of ALMAR 65. Commanding officers emphasized fair treatment of all Marines and made efforts to root out remnants of discrimination, at the same time taking strong action against violent militants. In October 1970, Lieutenant General McCutcheon, drawing an analogy to his personal fight against cancer, set the tone of III MAF's approach:

> Like human cancer this problem of racial minorities can have two outcomes. It can kill us if we don't operate soon enough. It can make us even stronger as a Corps and a nation if we face facts now and solve it. Let's continue to move out toward that end, but do so as mature, reasonable men in a sane, peaceful, nonviolent manner.[54]

The 1st Marine Division relied heavily on platoon-level leaders—officers and NCOs—to head off racial

*The division defined a racial incident as "a disagreement, disobedience and/or major act of violence perpetrated between or by individuals or groups with ethnic difference as a probable cause." 1st MarDiv/3d MAB CG's Information notebook, Apr71, in 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71.

trouble. During 1970, the division issued to each small unit leader a pamphlet on "The Racial Situation, Equality of Treatment and Opportunity."[55] Designed to guide junior officers and NCOs in carrying out the division "policy of equal treatment and opportunity," the pamphlet, distributed as a division order, called for "non-preferential" policies toward all Marines. It placed reponsibility for ensuring this on the platoon leader and warned that prejudice, often covert, did exist and that the leader must be alert to spot it. "The platoon leader must make it his business to find out whether all of his Marines do, in fact, enjoy equality of treatment. The only way this can be done is by self-education and by talking with his Marines individually and collectively." The pamphlet enjoined candid discussion of the racial problem within small units and called attention to opportunities for promotion and officer candidacy open to black Marines. Following ALMAR 65, the pamphlet declared the Afro haircut permissable within regulations; it urged leaders to avoid arbitrary appearance standards that went beyond regulations, as blacks viewed these as directed against them. Officers were to treat "Black Power" greetings and symbols as legitimate expressions of racial unity and pride, but the use by any Marine of "any signs, symbols, or gestures for the purpose of inciting or antagonizing or when they convey disrespect for authority is prohibited and . . . cause for disciplinary action." The pamphlet summed up:

> The platoon leader must express a positive attitude concerning the racial situation in the 1st Marine Division. He must be willing to discuss all aspects of the issues and seek to create understanding among his troops. The challenge is presented. Fundamentally, it is no different from others faced as a leader. To avoid it, or neglect it, is to fail. Meet the challenge with mental awareness and tenacity. Your success will make you "stand tall" among your fellow Marines!

By the beginning of 1970, all Marine, Army, Navy, and Air Force commands in I Corps Tactical Zone had formed "Leadership Councils" to supplement the regular chain of command in coping with racial tension. After the change of command in March 1970, a XXIV Corps Leadership Council, with representation from all major subordinate elements, capped this structure. In the 1st Marine Division, the division G-1, with the executive officers of regiments and separate battalions, and the division sergeant major, composed the Division Leadership Council. Each regiment and battalion had its own council, with membership "to be determined by the Commanding Officer." The councils had as their mission "monitoring and recommending appropriate action on reports of racial tensions and incidents."[56] Lieutenant Colonel Bernard E. Trainor, the commander of the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion in late 1970, was among the officers who found the leadership councils a valuable tool in combating racial unrest: "The first task which faced the Marine Corps was to learn and understand the nature of the racial phenomenon we were witnessing. In my judgement it was in pursuit of this end that valuable devices such as leadership councils were conceived and established."[57]

During 1970, these councils met regularly, but their purpose and value came into question. Many commanders regarded them as disruptive alternatives to the regular chain of command and complained that their meetings degenerated into a debating platform for militants or into general "gripe" sessions about nonracial issues. Reflecting these objections, Lieutenant General Jones declared in mid-1971 that leadership councils "obscure the chain of command, reduce the authority and responsibility of the commander and foster a dangerous precedent of rule by committee . . . . Weak and vacillating commanders," Jones continued, "were prone to overly depend on these bodies."[58]

In response to complaints of this nature and after surveying the experience of its subordinate commands, the 1st Marine Division on 15 February 1971 revamped its leadership council system. The division retained its own Leadership Council to "advise the Commanding General on race relations, transmit reports of information and recommendations concerning race relations, and serve as a focal point for the collection of information bearing on racial understanding and activities." Unit commanders now were "not required" to form councils but could do so "at their option." If formed, unit councils should define their concerns broadly, "including race relations," but "should not be used as a forum for the airing of personal 'gripes.'" The division cautioned commanders that "the existence of Leadership Councils may invite personnel to circumvent the chain of command which is counterproductive to the exercise of fundamental leadership."[59]

Besides forming leadership councils, most commands experimented with "race relations" or "human relations" classes designed to bring white and black Marines together to discuss racial problems. On 13 March 1970, for instance, Force Logistic Command established a "dynamics of group discussion" course,

taught by the command chaplain, for leadership council members from its subordinate units. Later, on 21 March, FLC instituted a required Race Relations course for all personnel. Each unit was to provide its own instructors; the FLC G-1 section would funish lesson plans and teaching materials. The prescribed syllabus called for four hours of instruction divided into five periods dealing respectively with "Individual and Group Communications, Promotion System, Opportunities through Education, Rights and Responsibilities, and Cultural Influences on the Contemporary American Scene."[60]

Marine Wing Support Group 17 tried a less formal and more intensive program. Group Chaplain Lieutenant Commander James G. Goode established a human relations seminar. Each class of both black and white Marines met four hours a day, one day a week, for three weeks, for general discussion of racial attitudes and conflicts. The seminar included from 12 to 16 sergeants and below who were selected or had volunteered to participate. Following conclusion of discussions, group and squadron commanders and the sergeant major were informed of the thoughts expressed. Copies of a report which summarized discussions and tapes of some discussions were provided to commanders. While race relations were often the focus, subjects covered included officer and enlisted relations, drug abuse, and the relationship of the individual Marine to the command and to the Marine Corps at large. Throughout, Chaplain Goode tried to make the men "walk around in each other's shoes" so as to reach a "broader understanding of each other as human beings, and not as a particular racial or ethnic individual."*[61]

Whatever formal programs were instituted, the burden of keeping racial peace fell on regimental, group, battalion, and squadron commanders and their junior officers and NCOs. Success required a careful day-to-day mixture of repression and conciliation. Some commands imposed evening curfews in their cantonments to reduce assaults and prevent militant gatherings. In MAG-13, Colonel Stien posted sentries to keep Army blacks out of his camp after 1800 each night and had his squadron commanders and executive officers attend floor shows at the enlisted clubs to keep order. Commanders made special efforts to identify and get rid of black militant leaders. When possible, they used disciplinary action or administrative discharges; if militants failed to give solid grounds for such action, many commanders resorted to transfer. In the 1st MAW, group commanders, by informal agreement, frequently moved known militants from unit to unit. Colonel Neal E. Heffernan, commander of MAG-11, explained: "It didn't matter where you sent him; just break it up and transfer him . . . . Even though he was still being transferred within the wing . . . this leader, malcontent, had to start all over, establish his reputation, reform his gang . . . ." Such efforts could backfire, however, as they intensified the fears of more moderate blacks that the "white" command had singled out all of their race for persecution.[62]

Unit experience with racial strife and response to it varied. The Combined Action Force was one of the few commands to have relatively little racial unrest. The CAF commander, Colonel Theodore E. Metzger, later explained:

> While the CAF had the undoubted advantage of exercising real selectivity in accepting new CAP Marines, it also offered each Marine an assignment of obviously great significance to the people of Vietnam. There weren't many CAF Marines who didn't quickly grasp this fact. The average Marine who fought with a CAP platoon was in my opinion, representative of the best qualities of America."[63]

Most commanders balanced repression with conciliation. They tried to find and correct genuine abuses, so as to deny the extremists valid issues. Colonel Haywood R. Smith, MAG-16 commander, used leadership council meetings to collect specific complaints. "I found," he reported, "that . . . if I showed them in the next hour, or the next day, that something was being done about the things that they had a justified [complaint] on, then I didn't have any problem, because the hard core . . . are very hard pressed to get any followers when they don't have any bitches . . . ."[64] Colonel Wilcox of the 1st Marines followed a similar policy. "We kept the channels of communication open pretty well with all Marines, black and white," he reported. "We had a viable request mast* procedure and we let these guys talk and get it out of their system. And that often solved the problem. As long as they could talk to somebody . . . it solved the problem."[65] When a racially sensitive film came to the MAG-13 club system, Colonel Stien, warned of

*These programs were forerunners of a Marine Corps-wide program of Human Relations Seminars, established in mid-1972. Shaw and Donnelly, *Blacks in the Marine Corps*, pp. 76-77.

*Request mast is a procedure under which a Marine is given an opportunity to present a problem or grievance to any officer in his chain of command.

potential violence by his white and black NCOs, initially prevented its showing. He allowed it to be screened later, after preparatory discussions with his troops, and no incidents resulted.[66]

Controlling prejudiced white NCOs could be a delicate problem. In the Communication Company, Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division, according to one officer, he perceived that some of the "most capable staff NCOs" were unfairly treating blacks in the unit. They were making formal charges that could lead to courtmartial and administrative discharge.

> . . . it became obvious to the blacks that they were being identified . . . as targets . . . they became very nervous . . . . We were dealing with some very capable and one-of-a-kind staff NCOs, technicians who were the only ones in Vietnam who knew how to repair certain kinds of equipment, so we couldn't sacrifice the troop [nor] sacrifice the staff NCO . . . . What the junior officers would do is we would appear in office hours with these troops and very politely destroy the case, if in fact it was a case that should be destroyed, without irritating the staff ot the senior officers to the point at which they turned on us . . . .[67]

Black NCOs were of varying effectiveness in mediating between commands and the young black Marine. III MAF had many strong black noncommissioned leaders, including Sergeant Major Huff, who served from October 1970 to the redeployment of III MAF Headquarters in April 1971. General McCutcheon remembered Huff, who had been a Marine since 1942, as "a pretty effective sergeant major," but he noted that many senior black NCOs had little in common with militants of the new generation. The latter often referred to the older blacks as "'Oreos,' black on the outside and white on the inside."[68] On the other hand, the 1st MAW, according to Major General Armstrong benefited from the presence on the wing inspector's staff of a "high quality" black staff sergeant "who is independent enough not to have been labeled as an Uncle Tom by most blacks."[69] Recalling III MAF's struggle to deal with race relations, Sergeant Major Huff offered another reason why black Marine leaders were only marginally effective:

> Two things stand out in my mind . . . Senior black SNCOs felt left out when the Corps implemented its human relations program; no one consulted them to determine how best to cope with the young black Marine who he had to supervise daily . . . . Both black and white SNCOs felt that the human relations program was forced down their throats.

Huff also believed that the problems the staff NCOs had dealing with the many leadership challenges in Vietnam resulted from two temporary officer programs—in which NCOs were commissioned to fill the void in the junior officer ranks—that diluted the quality of Marine noncommissioned officers: "These two programs tore the heart out of the very group the Corps had traditionally relied upon to be the bedrock of its stability."[70]

In some units white junior officers, often working informally with black NCOs, also played a mediating role. A white Marine captain recalled: "Largely the ones that were able to do the talking were the younger officers who had grown up and were impressed as youth, or were impressionable during their youth, when the whole change in the racial feeling in this country was coming about, so they could relate somewhat to the other side of the fence."[71]

Through formal programs and informal day-to-day adjustments, III MAF avoided major racial outbreaks during 1970-1971. In some commands, the situation appeared to improve. The 1st Marine Division, for example, reported 29 racial incidents during the first six months of 1970, an average of 0.2 incidents per 1,000 of strength per month. In the last six months of the year, only eight incidents occurred, a rate of 0.1 incident per 1,000 men per month.[72] In spite of such encouraging indications, commanders realized that only time, effort, and constant vigilance could overcome the racial polarization afflicting the Corps. Sergeant Majot Huff later offered his perspective of the racial unrest of the period and the Marine Corps' handling of it:

> Indeed Black militancy existed, but unit response to this problem was far from being effective. Many commands reacted to the surface problem with little in-depth information. Black militancy was never the awesome threat it has been given credit for being and if this idea is given credence in the hearts and minds of future officers and SNCOs then I fear the Corps could again find itself on the horns of a dilemma.[73]

Next to racial tension, the growing incidence of drug abuse was the most troubling personnel problem facing Marine commanders. Even more than racial conflict, drug abuse achieved crisis proportions comparatively suddenly. Major General Alan J. Armstrong, 1st MAW commander, told a briefing at FMFPac Headquarters in mid-1971: "Those of you that think you know a lot about the drug problem, if you were not out there in the last year, you need to reappraise your thoughts."[74]

The group chaplain of MWSG-17, Commander James G. Goode, USN, conducted a "Social Interest Survey," in 1970 to determine the extent of drug use

and to try to identify when, where, and why it started. His survey illustrated the size of the problem in III MAF. Administered to 1,241 Marines of MACG-28 and MWSG-17, whose responses remained anonymous, the survey indicated widespread use of drugs, predominantly marijuana, throughout the command. The findings of the survey were so sensitive at the time that the command did not want it released. As Chaplain Goode recalled:

> An attitude of total disbelief of the findings was expressed at the wing headquarters level. It appeared as though commands did not want to believe the immense drug involvement of the Marines. The ostrich syndrome was in effect: "If we don't know about it, it will go away," Or "Tell me what I want to hear."[75]

In the 1st Marine Division, the total number of drug-related administrative and judicial disciplinary actions increased from 417 in 1969 to 831 in 1970; these figures reflected intensified command concern, as well as expanded usage. The 1st Medical Battalion Neuropsychiatric Clinic diagnosed 3 drug abuse cases in 1968, 62 in 1969, and 143 in 1970. Unit commanders estimated during 1970 that 30-50 percent of their men had some involvement with drugs. Among III MAF Marines, marijuana was the most prevalent narcotic, followed by various locally produced stimulants and barbiturates. Heroin use remained rare until late 1970, when cheap and plentiful supplies of this dangerous drug, which earlier had appeared among U.S. Army units farther south, finally reached I Corps. Black and white Marines, from all social, economic, and educational levels used drugs in about equal proportion. Recognizing the obvious danger of drug use in a combat environment, troops in the field commonly avoided narcotics. Tolerance of drug use, even among drug users, while pursuing the enemy was very limited, but in rear areas and support units drug use at times reached epidemic proportions.[76]

The effects of widespread drug abuse on military operations were difficult to determine. Brigadier General Simmons declared it was "impossible to quantify just how debilitating drug use may have been to the 1st Marine Division." "In general," he explained, "poor performance attracts attention which leads to revelation of drug use. But this does not 'prove' that drug use caused the poor performance nor does it give any indication of how many 'good' performers use drugs." Major General Armstrong, on the other hand, reported that at least one 1st MAW unit "had a heroin problem that I viewed as an operational problem, no longer an administrative problem."[77]

Like racial conflict, the rising incidence of drug abuse came into III MAF from American society. In Vietnam, the abundance of cheap, relatively pure quality drugs, coupled with lax GVN enforcement of its own narcotics control laws, made it easy for Marines who arrived with the habit to continue it and facilitated experimentation by the uninitiated. Colonel Robert W. Teller, 1st MAW Chief of Staff, declared: "It's something in the climate that you're in out there. You can walk out on the road anywhere and for a dollar get a package of 'weeds.'" At Camp Books, the FLC contonment, according to the Security Company commander, "the kids would come up and toss the marijuana over the wire to sentries, day and night."[78]

As both civilian and military drug abuse became a public issue in the United States, III MAF, like other Vietnam commands, had to receive and brief a steady stream of delegations concerned with the problem. During August and September 1970, a Deputy Assistant to the President, a Department of Defense Drug Abuse Control Committee, and a group of staff members from the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee visited III MAF and other Marine commands at different times for briefings and investigations. In January 1971, members of the House Armed Services Committee made the same tour and received the same information.[79]

The visitors learned that III MAF relied heavily on troop education to prevent drug abuse. Commands employed all available media to impress upon the individual Marine the moral evils, legal consequences, and physical hazards of drugs. To help small-unit leaders educate their men, and to help them spot the presence and effects of drugs, the 1st Marine Division issued a platoon leaders' pamphlet similar to the one it distributed on the racial situation. The pamphlet included an extensive glossary of drug slang. To supplement unit efforts, III MAF, the division, and the wing organized special drug education teams to give detailed and, it was hoped, hard-hitting antidrug presentations. Commanders found that young, articulate, informed enlisted men and NCOs were their most effective teachers. III MAF during late 1970 used as its principal drug lecturer a former Milwaukee city probation officer, attached as a PFC to the G-1 section. This Marine had extensive experience in counseling drug-addicted civilian offenders.[80]

By early 1971, most major commands had created drug abuse councils, similar in function to leadership councils and composed of G-1, medical, legal, and

chaplain's representatives. Formally constituted drug abuse education contact teams traveled from unit to unit. In the 1st Marine Division, according to General Simmons, 18,000 Marines heard the division drug presentation during 1970. "In other words," he reported, "just about every Marine hears this lecture at least once during his tour in Vietnam. How much good does it do? I'm not sure."[81]

Where education failed, III MAF resorted to punishment. Units routinely searched vehicles entering and leaving their compounds for hidden drugs and conducted inspections of troop living and working areas. When they could, they arrested and prosecuted Marines who sold or regularly used drugs. Finding the offenders, however, and obtaining evidence against them proved difficult, since peer pressure and outright threats inhibited enlisted men against testifying. American military justice could not touch Vietnamese suppliers. Marines who were caught dealing in or using drugs received courts-martial or administrative discharges,* under a general policy of purging from the ranks Marines with any degree of drug involvement. Only first offenders or "one-time experimenters," at the commander's discretion,** might undergo lighter punishment and secure a chance to redeem themselves.[82]

*Drug possession and use were absolutely contrary to regulations and the UCMJ. Article 1270 of the Naval Regulations prohibited possession and use of narcotics, except for authorized medical purposes, on board any Navy ship or installation and by any member of the Naval Service. The UCMJ defined possession or use of marijuana or any other habit-forming narcotic as an offense under Article 134, Paragraph 213b, "Disorders and Neglects to the Prejudice of Good Order and Discipline in the Armed Forces." Convicted narcotics offenders could receive maximum sentences of dishonorable discharge, confinement for 10 years at hard labor, reduction to private, and forfeiture of all pay and allowances. Marijuana offenders were subject to identical punishment, but with a maximum imprisonment of five years. In the Marine Corps, addiction, habitual use, or unauthorized use or possession of narotics were grounds for administrative "discharge for unfitness," along with sexual perversion, shirking, failure to pay debts, and repeated infection with venereal disease. An unfitness discharge was ordinarily an undesirable discharge. Alcoholism, by contrast, entailed an unsuitability discharge, which normally was honorable or general. *Marine Corps Separation and Retirement Manual* (MCO P1900.16, 1968), paras 6016-6018.

**The CMC on 9 February 1970 permitted all commanders exercising general courtmartial jurisdiction to authorize or direct retention or direct discharge of any enlisted man involved with narcotics use or possession. Previously administrative discharges for narcotics involvement had required HQMC review and approval. CMC msg to ALMAR, dtd 9Feb70, Fldr 1900 (HQMC Central Files).

During late 1970, this policy became a subject for debate within and outside the Marine Corps. Some officers at the working level viewed strict enforcement of punishment and discharge as a waste of trained men. A communications officer in charge of Marines specially cleared to work with classified messages pointed out: "If a guy was caught with drugs he'd lose his clearance and then that was one less worker . . . , so it was very painful to us to have a highly skilled kid busted."[83] Increasingly, commanders and medical officers came to view drug abuse as a medical and social problem rather than a crime and suggested that users who voluntarily asked for help be exempted from punishment and offered rehabilitation assistance. Such a policy could rescue valuable military manpower and prevent the dumping back into society of ex-servicemen handicapped by drug dependence and unfavorable discharges. By mid-1970, a number of Army commands in the United States and at least one division, the 4th, in Vietnam, had instituted amnesty and treatment programs for users who turned themselves in. In August 1970, a DOD military/civilian task force on combating drug abuse included amnesty in its list of recommendations.[84]

Until well after the redeployment of the 3d MAB, the Marine Corps took an adamant stand against amnesty. On 10 October 1970, General Chapman stated this position in a strongly worded message to all commands: "The Marine Corps cannot tolerate drug use within its ranks. Those who experiment with drugs can expect to be punished. Those who become addicted will be separated . . . . Both types of user introduce unnecessary operational risk, as well as an unwholesome environment." Concerning rehabilitation Chapman added:

> The Marine Corps is neither funded nor equipped to carry the burden of noneffective members for the inordinate length of time that civilian institutions are finding necessary to achieve the rehabilitation of addicts. Even then the reversion rate is discouragingly high. In any case our medical resources are sufficiently taxed by duty-connected physical problems without intentionally taking on clinical or rehabilitative responsibilities . . . . As Marine Corps strength reduces to a post-Vietnam commitment level, the premium on professionalism goes even higher. We will only enlist or retain those who will conscientiously meet and maintain high standards. Drug users do not fit into that category.[85]

Within III MAF, General Chapman's policy statement created much confusion and disagreement, especially over what degree of drug abuse should be considered sufficient to dictate expulsion from the Ma-

Marine Corps Historical Collection

LtGen Henry W. Buse, Jr., and his successor as commanding general, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, LtGen William K. Jones, a former 3d Division commander, salute the colors during the change of command ceremony at Camp H. M. Smith, Hawaii in June 1970.

tine Corps. Lieutenant General McCutcheon interpreted the policy as "a restatement of what we are doing," which meant that "the first minor offender, one time experimenter or possessor of inconsequential amounts," at the unit commander's discretion, could be given a second chance. "If he does straighten up, he stays and if not, then he goes out."[86] Other commanders nevertheless, felt themselves constrained by Chapman's directive to adopt a very harsh policy in spite of dislike for its implications. Colonel Hugh S. Aitken, 1st Marine Division G-1, summed up the problem in March 1971:

> Is the one-time experimenter a kid that smokes a marijuana cigarette; or is the one-time experimenter a kid that does it for a weekend; or is the one-time experimenter the kid that goes on a week-long jag on marijuana and never touches it again . . . ? And what is the user . . . ? We are putting a lot of youngsters out of the Corps with undesirable . . . type discharges, without, I believe, a clear understanding of the policy at all levels. And the policy . . . is being interpreted in the extreme . . . .[87]

Even more serious, according to Major General Armstrong, the Commandant's policy, by eliminating any incentive for users to surrender voluntarily, hindered the discovery and removal of drug addicts from units. Late in 1970, Armstrong deliberately went against CMC policy to deal with an immediate crisis. A "rash" of drug-related incidents in MAG-16, in Armstrong's opinion, had "reached the stage . . . of creating a possible danger to flight operations." The group executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Robert P. Guay, with the consent of the group commander and the assistance of the chaplain and medical and legal officers, proposed a temporary amnesty as a "short-range solution" to reducing drug use. Armstrong authorized implementation of the plan, under which Marines who came forward of their own free will were kept out of the disciplinary system and received aid from a group drug action team. At the end of February 1971, the MAG-16 chaplain, Lieutenant John B. Fitzgerald, reported: "The . . . program combating drug abuse is showing its effectiveness. Both chaplains, legal [officers], flight-surgeons, and Squadrons are working together." Marines who asked for help took

part in counseling sessions and also in civic action projects. After a few months of operation, Armstrong ended the program, on the grounds that it had achieved the objective of alleviating the MAG-16 drug problem. He recalled later that he "caught a good bit of static" for introducing it; but he insisted: "I felt that we had an operational problem; I took an operational solution at the time. It worked . . . . If I'm ever faced with the same situation again, I'll do as I did then."*[88]

Compared to race and drugs, political dissent and refusal to engage in combat were minor problems for III MAF. Antiwar and radical groups, such as the American Servicemen's Union and the Movement for a Democratic Military, won adherents and established coffee houses and underground newspapers at Marine bases in the United States, Okinawa, and Japan, but few agitators appeared in III MAF units. Those who did found themselves under close command surveillance and lacking outside civilian support, accomplished little. III MAF reported no collective refusals of Marines who were unwilling to go to the field to fight with their units although some individual Marines refused, but these were generally individual cases of combat fatigue or disobedience and the commanders treated them as such. In many units, disregard for Marine Corps standards of appearance and military courtesy was common; especially to veteran NCOs, the general attitude of junior enlisted Marines seemed defiant and hostile. On their side, enlisted men expressed anger at an impersonal "Green Machine." These tensions never reached massive proportions, although they contributed to occasional acts of violence against officers and NCOs.[89]

To rid itself of problem Marines of all sorts, during 1970 III MAF relied increasingly on administrative discharges.** Early in the year, General Chapman anticipating post-Vietnam manpower reductions, ordered all commanders to "clean house" by administratively separating men who did not meet Marine Corps performance and disciplinary standards. The commands in Vietnam took full advantage of this policy. In October 1970, for instance, the 1st Marine Division directed that "Individual Marines whose service is characterized by a record of substandard performance of duty, numerous minor disciplinary infractions, or diagnosed character behavior disorders" be processed for administrative discharge. Many division Marines fitted into those categories. During 1969, the division issued 121 administrative discharges; in 1970, it issued 809.[90]

From the commander's point of view, administrative discharge had the great virtue of ridding the unit of troublemakers comparatively quickly, by relatively simple procedures. The Military Justice Act of 1968, which went into effect on 1 July 1969, had lengthened and complicated the military judicial process;*** but an administrative separation could be accom-

*The Marine Corps today (early 1986) has a general drug exemption program under policies and procedures prescribed by DOD and the Secretary of the Navy. The program is "a legal guarantee of exemption from adverse disciplinary and/or administrative consequences which may result from the disclosure . . . of personal drug abuse for the purpose of facilitating treatment or rehabilitation." It is now "the policy of the Marine Corps to prevent and eliminate drug abuse within the Marine Corps and to restore to full duty those Marines who have abused drugs and who have potential for continued useful service." The exemption privilege can be exercised only through voluntary disclosure and only once by any individual. Marine Corps Order (MCO) 5300.12, dtd 25Jun84.

**Administrative discharges could be honorable, general, or undesirable; the two most unfavorable types of separation—Bad Conduct Discharges and Dishonorable Discharges—could be issued only by sentence of courtmartial. Administrative discharges could be given on a number of grounds. The most common grounds were Convenience of the Government, Unsuitability, and Undesirability. Discharges on the first two of these grounds had to be honorable or general; discharge for unfitness had to be undesirable unless circumstances in a particular case warranted an honorable or general discharge. On most grounds, either the CMC or the individual's superior in the chain of command having general courtmartial convening authority could issue an administrative discharge, but certain cases—such as unsuitability by reason of sexual deviance and unfitness due to active sexual perversion—had to be referred to the CMC, as did drug cases until early 1970. A Marine proposed by his commander for undesirable discharge was entitled to a hearing before a board of officers convened by the appropriate commander with general courtmartial authority. The defendant automatically received military counsel and could retain a civilian lawyer at his own expense; he could present witnesses on his behalf and question the command's witnesses. The board then would recommend either retention or discharge, subject to review by the commander convening the board, who could accept the decision, modify it in favor of the defendant, or set it aside and convene a new board. *Marine Corps Separation and Retirement Manual* (MCO P1900.16), paras. 6002, 6005, 6009-6021, 6024.

***Under the Military Justice Act of 1968, both special and general courtsmartial, had to be tried with the full panoply of a certified military judge and judge-advocate prosecution and defense counsel. Further, most offenders of any type could have their cases tried by courtmartial. This created an immediate strain on the limited number of military lawyers with the commands. The 1st Marine Division, to alleviate this problem, created a "County Courthouse" of continuously sitting military courts at division headquarters to try all special courts-martial from the various battalions. See 1st MarDivO P5800.1B, dtd 5Feb70, in 1st MarDiv ComdC, Feb70.

plished in about 30 days. Commanders, therefore, often preferred the administrative procedure to court-martial, even for offenders they believed merited the more severe penalties a court could impose. Administrative discharge, according to a judge advocate with Force Logistic Command, "cut out [in] the least expensive way those persons who are not going to succeed, those persons who are nonrehabilitable, and those persons who just can't hack it."[91]

'Fragging' and Operation Freeze

The slang term "fragging," which in aviation referred to the issuing of fragmentary mission orders, acquired a more sinister connotation during the last years of ground combat in Vietnam. The 1st Marine Division concisely defined the new meaning of the term: "a deliberate, covert assault, by throwing or setting off a grenade or other explosive device, or the preparation and emplacement of such a device as a boobytrap, with the intention of harming or intimidating another."[92] More specifically, "fragging" usually denoted the attempted murder of an officer or NCO by an enlisted man, often by means of an M26 fragmentation grenade.

American commanders had been attacked by their own men in earlier wars, but in Vietnam the frequency of such incidents increased dramatically and they received extensive and—in some radical groups—sympathetic publicity.[93] III MAF, like other component commands in Vietnam, had to meet this new threat from within its ranks. During 1970, in the 1st Marine Division, one Marine died and 41 others were injured in 47 fraggings. The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and Force Logistic Command also had their share of these crimes. FLC suffered the most costly single fragging of the year on the night of 5 February, when a Marine tossed a grenade into the crowded patio of the Maintenance Battalion enlisted men's club. The resulting explosion killed one Marine and wounded 62. Marine commanders reviewing the record of these outrages found little consolation in the knowledge that the U.S. Army problems were even more severe. During 1970, the 1st Marine Division, with its 47 fraggings, had an incident rate of 0.2 per thousand.[94]

Fraggings in III MAF plagued both secure rear areas and forward positions. In the 1st Marine Division, 62 percent of the assaults during 1970 took place in cantonments near Da Nang; 38 percent occurred at combat and fire support bases, observation posts, and battalion CPs. Clubs and living areas were favorite targets, with grenades typically rolled through a hut or bunker entrance or exploded against a wall. Lower-ranking enlisted men committed most fraggings, commonly against NCOs and junior officers.[95] The motives for fragging were as varied as the tensions afflicting III MAF. A few fraggings, including the one in Maintenance Battalion, appeared to have been racially motivated. Others reflected anger and resentment at a particular small-unit leader or were efforts to get rid of an incompetent or particularly aggressive commander. Many fraggings were committed under the influence of alcohol or drugs or for drug-related reasons, for example pusher-buyer disputes or intimidation of informers. Probably the majority of fraggings resulted from individual personality disturbances. Brigadier General Simmons observed:

> In a surprising number of cases after it happens . . . we learn things like, "Oh, yeah, we were worried about Bill. He'd been acting funny." Or so-and-so said he was going to frag the gunny. . . . Or they say, "We were watching him."[96]

The perpetrators of fraggings were difficult to find, and if found they were even harder to convict. As was true in narcotics cases, enlisted Marines hesitated to turn in their peers. According to Lieutenant General Jones, "We were faced with the typical teen-age no-squeal syndrome." Fear of being fragged themselves if they came forward also helped silence potential witnesses. For the authorities, frustration often resulted. In the Maintenance Battalion fragging, the Naval Investigative Service (NIS) eventually arrested four enlisted Marines, but Marine courts-martial acquitted all the defendants.[97]

In mid-1970, III MAF instituted Operation Freeze, designed to make escape more difficult for fraggers and conviction more certain. Lieutenant General Jones had developed the program during 1969 while commanding the 3d Marine Division. As Commanding General, FMFPac, Jones passed the concept on to Lieutenant General McCutcheon. Jones recalled:

> They were having another rash of fragging in III MAF . . . and I went out on a visit there and had a big session with all the division commanders and I told Keith about my division order. And I said, "Keith, you've got to stop this." He agreed . . . of course. So I sent my order to him and he took it, and he wrote a III MAF order based on that order.[98]

By the end of 1970, most III MAF commands had put Operation Freeze into effect. Under the system, each unit reacted to a fragging or other violent act ac-

cording to prearranged and previously rehearsed procedures. Military police or an infantry reaction force immediately closed all entrances and exits of the cantonment and cordoned the area of the incident. Company and platoon commanders assembled their men and called roll; they took into custody any Marines from other units found in their areas. All NCOs and other enlisted Marines then went to their living quarters and stayed there until they received further orders, while specially assigned teams searched the incident site and each hut or barracks. Meanwhile, the unit legal officer, assisted by NIS and Criminal Investigation Division personnel, set up an interrogation point, where each Marine, brought from his quarters, underwent private questioning about the incident. The interrogators, as General Jones put it, would "call in each Marine and point out to him his responsibilities as a man, as a Marine, as a Christian." This process continued until suspects had been identified and arrested. During it, the unit cancelled all leaves and suspended personnel rotations.[99]

As an auxiliary to Operation Freeze, FMFPac and III MAF issued a steady stream of orders and messages designed to impress upon the individual Marine the "cowardly context" of fraggings and other acts of violence and to convince him that "identification of criminals is the responsibility of every citizen" and "is not playing the role normally attributed to being an informer." Of more practical value, the commands promised protection, if necessary by transfer out of Vietnam, to any Marine who volunteered information.[100] The 1st Marine Division in addition imposed strict control of grenades and other explosive devices and conducted frequent inspections* of troop quarters for potentially dangerous materials. The division also emphasized preventive action. A division order in mid-December 1970 directed small-unit leaders to "be alert as to behavior or symptoms which may signal the possibility of a violent act" and where appropriate to arrange for the immediate medical treatment, transfer, or administrative separation of potentially dangerous men. Commanders were to keep close watch on such possible fraggers and withhold weapons from them "except in the extreme case where their lives might be endangered by enemy action."[101]

By the end of 1970, Operation Freeze and its associated measures appeared to be producing results. In the first half of the year, the 1st Marine Division solved only 10 of 26 fraggings. During July, August, and September, division units made arrests in five of 10 cases, and in the last three months of the year the division solved seven out of 11 fraggings. In two cases during December, individual Marines, responding to the offer of protection, furnished information that led to arrests, confessions, and convictions. Only two fraggings, neither of which caused any casualties, occurred between January and April 1971. The division G-1 staff attributed this encouraging trend to the effectiveness of Operation Freeze and to the fact that "few, if any, such incidents . . . occur in . . . units standing down."[102]

Training and Morale-Building

Besides trying to remedy specific disciplinary problems, III MAF carried on a broad training and morale-building effort. The necessity for training increased as combat diminished and an often false sense of security led to slackness in the field. Repeatedly, regimental and battalion commanders had to remind their small-unit leaders to follow correct tactical procedures. In May 1970, for example, Lieutenant Colonel Johan S. Gestson, commanding the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, declared: "Ambushes are often compromised by Marines smoking, coughing, or talking and fire power is not effective frequently." He directed his company and platoon commanders to "take immediate corrective action to upgrade marksmanship and discipline in ambushes."[103] At the end of his tour as commander of the 1st Marines, Colonel Wilcox observed: "The best training the Division could get is to get out of Vietnam and . . . get people teaching . . . fire support, fire discipline, fire control, sensors, and a lot of other things that . . . we're awful shaky on."[104]

While unable to follow Wilcox' advice about getting out of Vietnam, the 1st Marine Division did the next best thing. It conducted continuous training aimed at preparing Marines to "fight aggressively and intelligently in a counterinsurgency environment" and to "maintain the individual Marine's readiness to

*Commanders had to observe a fine legal line between inspection and search. Inspection was "a legitimate review of persons and property to insure the fitness and readiness of the unit to execute its mission." A search "has as its purpose the uncovering of physical evidence to support an apprehension or charge . . . . There must be reason to believe that a crime has been committed and that the fruits of the crime or other evidence may be found on the person or property to be searched." Nevertheless, unannounced inspections were "legitimate forms of military inspections," during which officers could seize contraband material, including unauthorized ordnance. 1stMarDivO 5830.1, Subj: Standing Operating Procedures for Prevention of Crimes of Violence, dtd 13Dec70, tab B15, 1st MarDiv ComdC, Dec70.

redeploy to other combat/combat ready zones." Following division guidelines, each battalion regularly put its men through refresher weapons and tactics instruction. Colonel James E. Hartell, commander of the 26th Marines in 1970, said that Lieutenant Colonel William C. Drumright designed a retraining program for the 2d Battalion to counter the bad habits that were often developed:

> He took in one platoon for 10 days and conducted fire team and squad training. He went back to basics, even marksmanship and grenade throwing. It was . . . a most successful program since it was a unit program. By the little statistics we were able to gather in the remaining time we had in country, it appeared that casualties went down in retrained platoons especially during night patrols and ambushes.[105]

The retraining touched other areas also: rules of engagement, Vietnamese customs, and race relations. The cycle was concluded with a steak and egg breakfast, followed by an inspection, usually by Lieutenant Colonel Drumright or his executive officer. Other units developed similar programs. The division operated formal schools for officer and NCO leadership, scout-sniper instruction, and mine and boobytrap countermeasures, with monthly student quotas allotted to each regiment. Each month, division Marines, with others from the wing and FLC, attended the III MAF Vietnamese Language and Combined Action Force schools or went to Okinawa for specialized technical courses.[106]

Each battalion managed a complex variety of training activities. During April 1970, the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines held staff officers' and NCOs' schools. Each rifle company conducted training in employment of supporting arms, ambush tactics, leadership, racial problems, and the rules of engagement; all incoming Marines received combat firing instruction on the battalion rifle range. Seventy-five percent of battalion Marines attended drug abuse classes taught by the division drug contact team. Twenty-seven men went to a division class in operation and maintenance of the expetimental XM-191 Multi-Shot Portable Flame Weapon. The battalion sent 40 men to the division mine and boobytrap school, 2 officers to officers' leadership school, and 10 NCOs to staff NCO and NCO leadership schools. Two Marines attended division 16mm projectionist school, and eight took a course on multi-channel radio equipment.[107]

Other III MAF elements conducted similarly extensive training. In Force Logistic Command, for instance, the Supply Battalion, 1st FSR regularly instructed its Marines in marksmanship, weapon and motor vehicle safety, first aid, and defense against nuclear, biological, and chemical attack. The battalion held seminars on drugs and personal response and classes on proper treatment of civilians. Battalion Marines took courses each month in one or more supply specialties, and the battalion's Ration Company trained bakers from FLC, the division, and the wing.[108]

All Marine commands provided extensive troop recreation facilities and personnel services. At the beginning of 1970, the III MAF G-1 staff, in addition to its prescribed functions, operated a Rest and Recuperation (R&R) Center at China Beach in East Da Nang and the Freedom Hill Day Recreation Center just west of Da Nang Airbase. III MAF coordinated R&R assignments and travel for all United States personnel in I Corps. It sponsored and scheduled USO and other professional entertainment groups, and it had charge of Armed Forces motion picture distribution. As part of its exchange of roles with XXIV Corps, III MAF, in late February 1970, turned its entertainment scheduling and film distribution responsibilities over to the U.S. Army 80th Special Services Group.[109]

The Freedom Hill Recreation Center, one of III MAF's largest entertainment facilities, served 6,000-7,000 off-duty Marines, soldiers, sailors, and airmen each day; it was open most days of every month. The center included an indoor 35mm motion picture theater and fully equipped bowling lanes. Due to its location, Freedom Hill catered largely to rear-area troops rather than frontline riflemen. Colonel Wilcox, the 1st Marines commander, commented: "Every time I drove past Freedom Hill, it bothered me. It seems to me that's an investment in manpower and facilities for the wrong people." III MAF retained control over Freedom Hill until 28 February 1971, when the center came under Army management during the final Marine redeployments.[110]

The division, wing, and FLC maintained their own recreational facilities. Early in 1970, the division had 12 officers' clubs, 21 staff NCO and NCO clubs, and 26 enlisted men's clubs in operation, as well as 16 post exchange stores and 1 main and 11 unit post offices. Besides a comparably complete club system, the 1st MAW boasted a hobby shop complete with a model car racing track and a golf pro shop with a driving cage. Force Logistic Command units enjoyed equally elaborate facilities, including post exchanges with civilian gift shops and concessions.[111]

Individual regiments and battalions developed their own off-duty amenities, some of which, even in deployed infantry units, were extensive. The 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, south of Da Nang, described its troop services in language reminiscent of a resort advertisement:

> The Enlisted Club has a large outdoor theater which features nightly movies and weekly floor shows. An outstanding beach on the South China Sea with facilities for patties is very popular. A lifeguard is on duty and swimming is permitted at noon and late afternoon on a daily basis. In addition to nightly movies, Special Services provides a weight room, a well stocked reading room and a wide assortment of athletic equipment. Commercial services in the cantonment include a Marine Corps Exchange, laundry, photo shop, and gift shop. Camp Lauer, the battalion headquarters cantonment, has an efficient mess hall which provides three hot meals to approximately 600 men on a daily basis.[112]

Ground combat units, however, found very little time or opportunity to cycle units to the rear for recreation even as redeployment approached. "During my stay (at Camp Lauer) we were far too busy to utilize much recreation," recalled Lieutenant Colonel William V. H. White, commander of 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, "but during low threat periods we did bring individual platoons from the rifle companies to get a little rest and time on the beach."[113]

The clubs and other recreational facilities, extensive as they were, only partially alleviated the discomfort and boredom of life in often crowded cantonments in a tropical climate. For units in remote or outlying Marine positions, for example at Chu Lai, the amenities were much less elaborate. In many commands, reductions in military activity increased the burden on spare-time amusement facilities to, and in some cases beyond, capacity.

To meet the troops' religious needs, each III MAF battalion or larger organization had one or more Navy chaplains. These hard-working men, besides holding regular worship services in the cantonments, used every opportunity to carry religious support to Marines in the field. In the 7th Marines, according to Colonel Edmund G. Derning, Jr., "on Sunday afternoon, my whole command and control helicopter package went to the chaplains, and I wanted to see the plan where they made every effort to get out to every . . . unit and hold something . . . . It's just symbolic. It's what you stand for." Chaplains conducted Bible classes, religious retreats, and discussion groups. They counseled troubled Marines and visited the wounded and sick in the hospitals and prisoners in the brig. They played a major part in the civic action and personal response programs, as well as assuming much of the burden of teaching race relations seminars and drug abuse classes.*[114]

Each Marine had the chance to take at least one week of "Rest and Recreation" (R&R) outside the country during his Vietnam tour. Under a program administered by MACV, regularly scheduled military flights left Da Nang each month for Hong Kong, Bangkok, Okinawa, Manila, Tokyo, Taipei, Sydney, and Honolulu. The division, wing, and FLC received monthly allocations of seats on these flights. Through the Special Services officers of their G-1 staffs, the major commands apportioned seats among their subordinate units in proportion to their manpower strength. Individual Marines could apply to their unit commanders for particular R&R cities and dates. The units distributed the available leave on the basis of their own internal policies, usually giving Marines longest in Vietnam preference among dates and places. Commands occasionally used extra R&R as a performance award. During early 1971, for example, the 1st Marine Division offered a "mini-R&R" to Hong Kong or Bangkok to any man who uncovered a Communist rocket.[115]

Marines bound for or returning from R&R passed through the III MAF R&R Processing Center, part of the larger III MAF Transient Facility. Operated by the Headquarters and Service Battalion, 1st FSR, the Transient Facility was located near Freedom Hill. Navy Seabees had completed its construction early in 1969. The facility included two terminal buildings, a mess hall, and Southeast Asia huts and barracks for temporary housing of Marines awaiting transportation to R&R, as well as those joining or leaving III MAF. Each month, the R&R portion of the transient facility accommodated over 10,000 men from all American commands in I Corps. III MAF operated the facility until 1 July 1970, when USARV took it over as part of the Army assumption of common service support.[116]

III MAF and the 1st Marine Division provided additional R&R opportunities within Vietnam. All officers and men were eligible for three-day rest periods at the III MAF China Beach R&R Center. Each quarter, organizations received quotas for China Beach, as they did for overseas R&R, and distributed them according to unit internal policies. A Marine using China Beach retained his right to a trip outside Vietnam. The China Beach facility, located in East Da

*For a detailed account of Navy chaplains with III MAF, see Bergsma, *Chaplains with Marines in Vietnam*.

Nang just north of Marble Mountain Air Facility, contained an exchange, a USO center, and a cafeteria and snack bar. Marines could attend films, go swimming in the South China Sea, work out in a gymnasium, or avail themselves of the tennis courts, softball field, shuffleboard and volleyboard courts, and archery range. The entire complex had as its objective "to provide . . . billeting, messing, and recreational facilities in a relaxed atmosphere."[117]

To give infantry companies temporary relief from the strain of constant operations, the 1st Marine Division during 1969 established a "Stack Arms" center at Camp Lauer, what was then the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion's and then in mid-1970 the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines' cantonment south of Marble Mountain. Infantry companies, in rotation, spent 48-hour stand-down periods at this camp, in effect a simpler and smaller version of China Beach. Here, relieved of all regular duties, the riflemen could enjoy beer, steaks, sports, swimming, and leisure. Regimental commanders regarded "Stack Arms" as an excellent morale-builder, but limited facilities allowed each company to take advantage of the program only twice a year.[118]

During 1970, Colonel Edmund G. Derning, Jr., instituted a similar program within the 7th Marines. On a monthly basis each rifle company in the regiment went back to a 7th Marines base for 72 hours of rest and rehabilitation. According to Derning, "only the most distressing of operational requirements, actual contact or commitment with the enemy" could force a company to skip its scheduled rest period. The program was designed to give the men a little rest, update administrative records, repair weapons and individual equipment, and return to the field three days later refreshed. Derning recalled:

> This was not a rest break, . . . as they marched in, they were relieved of their weapons by armorers. Weapons were tagged, any deficiencies noted, and they were turned over to the armorers for repair. The troops continued to march, were stripped down, and were examined by corpsmen and medical officers for health problems and so on. After this examination and the notes and comments were taken for care . . . the troops continued on for a complete washdown and usually that afternoon a steak dinner, a little kind of beer-bust or something in a safe, secure area.
>
> On the second day weapons were prepared, personnel records were updated – birth recorded, promotions rendered – and in the afternoon when the weapons were returned, weapons were fanfired and zeroed. Supplies, rations, and ammunition were issued on day three, and the men were mustered outside the billets where a battalion or regimental inspection was conducted. When the inspection was complete, the Marines shouldered their packs and weapons, the chaplain offered a blessing and a moment of prayer, and the company, which was not permitted to return to their billeting area, marched back out into their area of operations.[119]

Military recreation facilities were much needed during III MAF's last year of combat, because Marines, like other American personnel, were effectively forbidden access to the Vietnamese civilian economy. XXIV Corps and III MAF during 1970 kept the city of Da Nang, and all other Vietnamese towns, villages, and hamlets, off-limits to troops unless they were on official business with written authorization from unit commanders or staff section heads. The commands also placed a 2000-0600 nightly curfew on movement outside United States bases and effectively closed all Vietnamese businesses and places of entertainment, as well as private homes, to American military personnel. Only advisors and other Americans who had to attend social engagements with counterparts were exempt from this ban. By these stringent regulations, the commands hoped to improve military security, reduce prostitution and the drug traffic, and prevent confrontations between American troops and the increasingly hostile civilian population.[120]

On 25 April 1971, XXIV Corps partially relaxed these restrictions; it opened Da Nang City to off-duty personnel between 0600 and 2300 each day. 3d MAB followed the new policy, but it required all Marines going into Da Nang to travel in vehicles provided by their units and with an on-duty armed driver and guard in each. The first open week in Da Nang passed without major incident, although the CORDS city advisor considered it a poor test, since it was the week before a payday. Still, he reported, "bars, restaurants, souvenir stores, cycle and Honda drivers have enjoyed a bonanza," and Vietnamese national police at the air base had intercepted many incoming prostitutes on civilian flights from Saigon. Da Nang remained open throughout the 3d MAB's remaining time in Vietnam.[121]

Besides furnishing recreation and services for their troops, III MAF commanders by late 1970 were devoting much thought and effort to solving what they called the "communication" problem. Lieutenant General Jones summed up the widespread concern: "Simply stated," he declared, "we aren't getting the word out. We aren't spending enough time making Marines understand what we're trying to achieve and why." In the same vein, General Chapman exhorted commanders to "establish communications through

the chain of command . . . from the very top to the very bottom, and back up again."[122]

Efforts to reopen communication took many forms. Force Logistic Command set up a special information telephone, manned 24 hours a day by members of the G-1 staff, to answer Marines' questions about administrative and personnel matters. Individual officers had their own approaches to communicating with troops. Lieutenant General Robertson, when visiting a unit, preferred to talk with enlisted Marines:

> . . . individually or in twos or threes—needle them a little and get a feel for them. I learned long ago if you've got your own antennas up and you're really listening, a young Marine doesn't have to complain in a loud, direct manner for you to realize there may be a problem he's trying to tell you about.[123]

Whatever their personal approaches, Marine commanders had had the realization forced upon them that, as Major General Armstrong put it, "We've got a . . . lot of people in this younger generation it's going to take a little extra to get through to."[124] As with so many other problems of the war, this one had to be placed in the category of "Unfinished Business" as the last Marines left Da Nang.

Cohesion or Disintegration?

It is impossible to measure with any precision how severely the deterioration of morale and discipline affected III MAF's military performance. Commanders almost unanimously denied that trouble in the ranks had any adverse influence on operations. Typically, Lieutenant General McCutcheon declared that, in his estimation, III MAF never approached a critical loss of cohesion and that Marine disciplinary problems were "nowhere near the extent that the Army . . . experienced."[125] Colonel Stien, who had faced significant racial disorder in MAG-13, cautiously echoed McCutcheon's assessment. "I felt," Stien said, "as though I was capable of taking care of the problem but I didn't like what I might have to do."[126] In spite of racial tension, drug abuse, occasional fraggings, and general dissension, III MAF until the final redeployments continued to carry out daily operations requiring a high degree of skill and coordination, while at the same time managing a series of complicated redeployments. Nevertheless, the fact that the question of troop reliability even arose demonstrated the severity of the internal problem, as did the amount of command attention devoted to race relations, drug education, and other personnel matters unrelated to the combat mission.

A glass is either half-full or half-empty depending on the viewpoint of the observer. Against the statistics on racial incidents, drug use, fraggings, accidents, and atrocities must be set the fact that thousands of Marines continued to do their duty to the end. Many daily risked death and mutilation for a cause that perhaps a majority of their civilian contemporaries, as well as substantial numbers of their country's most eminent leaders, denounced as immoral or dismissed as no longer important to national security. Sergeant Major Huff later observed that despite all of the unrest in III MAF during the latter stages of the war "the majority of the Marines I met in Vietnam met the challenge presented to them in stride; no one knows this better than General Giap of the NVA."[127] At the end of his tour in command of the 1st Marines, Colonel Wilcox paid tribute to this military "silent majority:"

> I saw daily . . . examples of raw courage, selflessness, and dedication that made me both proud and humble . . . to have been serving with those men . . . . They really put it on the line, day in and day out . . . . I just really am tremendously proud to have been a part of them.[128]

CHAPTER 21

U.S. Marine Advisors and Other Activities

U.S. Marine Advisors and the Vietnamese Marine Corps—The Vietnamese Marine Corps in Lam Son 719 The Marine Advisory Unit and Solid Anchor—Sub-Unit 1, 1st Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company The Special Landing Force—Marines on the MACV Staff—Embassy Marines—Conclusion

U.S. Marine Advisors and the Vietnamese Marine Corps

U.S. Marine Advisors supported the Vietnamese Marine Corps (VNMC) from its activation in October 1954. Originally a part of the Naval Advisory Group (NAG), which was responsible to ComUSMACV, the Marine Advisory Unit (MAU) was the link between the VNMC and the American command. At the beginning of 1970, the MAU was commanded by the Senior Marine Advisor (SMA), Colonel William M. Van Zuyen, and had a Marine strength* of 39 officers and five enlisted men. In addition, the staff usually had one Navy doctor as medical advisor and two corpsmen. American Marines from all general occupational fields—combat, combat support, and combat service support—rounded out the MAU staff. Marines advised most VNMC staff sections, and since VNMC battalions tended to maneuver tactically in two large elements, common MAU practice was to have two Marine advisors with each battalion, one with each element, and three advisors with each brigade.[1]

Activated in 1954, the VNMC was formed from old French-organized commando and riverine units. The VNMC was originally assigned to conduct amphibious and riverine operations as part of the Vietnamese Navy (VNN). From 1954 to 1971 the VNMC expanded from a strength of 1,150 officers and men to 13,500,[2] growing from a brigade- to a division-size organization, while gaining separate service status. From its very beginning the VNMC was an impottant combat element of the RVNAF. As part of the General Reserve, it fought in all four Corps areas, and during the 1968 Tet Offensive helped retake the Citadel in Hue City.

Relying on U.S. Marine Corps advisors from the start, the VNMC, unsurprisingly, reflected this influence in its recruiting, organization, and training. Like its American counterpart, the VNMC recruited volunteers and did not draft. Its recruiting program stressed partriotism and challenged "young men to ptove themselves equal to rigorous, disciplined life." This proved to be as effective in Vietnam as it was in the United States. Thirteen enlisted recruiting teams were located throughout the country. By mid-1971, 610 men were being enlisted monthly, which was enough to replace "normal attrition" and keep up with authorized strength increases. Officers were appointed from varied sources: the National Military Academy, the two-year infantry school for reserve officers, and the 12-week officer course for meritorious NCOs.[3]

The MAU emphasized the importance of training. By 1971 the VNMC Training Command, located northwest of Thu Duc in Military Region III near Saigon, could accommodate 2,000 students and provide basic recruit and advanced individual infantry training, as well as officer, NCO, and sniper courses.

Since 1956 some 200 VNMC officers and a number of enlisted men had attended courses in the United States and Okinawa. Included were 14 lieutenants and two captains who had attended either the U.S. Marine Corps Basic School or Amphibious Warfare School at Quantico during 1957 and 1958 and now held key positions, including Commandant, in the VNMC. One-fourth of the training command instructors had been through U.S. Marine recruit training, the Drill Instructor School at San Diego, and had completed the U.S. Marine Corps Marksmanship Instructor Course. Offshore training gave the VNMC vital knowledge and skills, and also created "a basis for common understanding between MAU personnel and the Vietnamese—a factor essential to the successful advisory effort."[4]

The mission of the MAU was to "foster a VNMC capable of conducting amphibious, riverine, helicopterborne, and ground operations, and to assist in establishing a sound, enduring logistical and administrative procedure within the VNMC."[5] The MAU also closely monitored the Military Assistance Service Fund (MASF) program that supported the Vietnamese Marines.

The VNMC requisitioned most of its supplies and equipment through the RVNAF supply system until

*The task organization of the MAU was increased in the spring of 1970 to include 56 officers and 22 enlisted Marines. Col Richard F. Armstrong, Comments on draft ms, n.d. (Vietnam Comment File). Armstrong's comments include a memo depicting the changed T/O. See also monthly historical summaries for personnel breakdowns.

1966, the year MASF was established. Under MASF the American Marine advisors furnished the VNMC material not commonly used by other RVNAF Services or needed to equip new units. Responsibility fell on the MAU to verify VNMC requirements and determine which must be met by MASF. The MAU also conducted periodic inventories of U.S. equipment held by the Vietnamese Marines and made recommendations to upgrade their equipment.

In 1971 the MAU had set these goals: increase VNMC strength to 13,462 by the end of the year; provide full and continuing MASF support, including training the VNMC in the proper use and maintenance of equipment; improve individual and unit training; and improve living conditions for Vietnamese Marines and their families. While advisory efforts in the past had concentrated on improvement of combat skills, the MAU now emphasized logistics. American Marine advisors worked vigorously to develop a "definitive supply management system within the VNMC." In short, the Marine Advisory Unit readjusted "the nature of its support" as the VNMC demonstrated self-sufficiency in specific areas.[6]

To improve VNMC morale and esprit de corps, as well as battlefield effectiveness, and to strengthen allegiance to the Government of South Vietnam, the MAU and VNMC worked to improve the health and well-being of the Vietnamese Marines' families. American Marine advisors put many man-hours into civic action projects to better the lot of the Vietnamese Marines and their dependents. Projects included operating a pig farm for low-cost meat and a commissary with foods at reduced rates; building dependent housing; upgrading base camps; and constructing a new hospital. In 1971 the SMA reported that "more must be and is being done, primarily by the Vietnamese themselves, but with extensive MAU assistance."[7]

With its American Marine advisors, the VNMC conducted primarily battalion-size operations in 1970. The year began slowly with the Vietnamese Marines searching for an elusive enemy. In late January, however, while operating in Chuong Thien and Kien Giang Provinces, southwest of Saigon in IV Corps as part of Amphibious Task Force 211, a battalion of Brigade A made heavy contact. In the early morning hours of the 22d, the *K-2* and *K-6 Battalions* of the

The relative simplicity of a South Vietnamese Marine Corps battalion command post during the fall of 1970 is depicted below. Capt Peter C. Anderson, Assistant Advisor to the 6th VNMC Battalion, left, is shown with Maj Tung, center, and his staff.

Courtesy of Col John G. Miller, USMC

Courtesy of Col John G. Miller, USMC

A South Vietnamese Marine "Cowboy" holds his transistor radio while perched on a field hammock. The so called "Cowboys" were South Vietnamese Marine enlisted men assigned to the advisors to assist the Americans with minor chores in the field.

T-18 Regiment, a VC main force unit, launched a coordinated ground attack at 0340 against a rifle company and elements of the Headquarters and Service Company of the 1st VNMC Battalion. The brigade command post and Battery B, which was in direct support of the company in contact, were simultaneously attacked by mortars.

The VC conducted a diversionary attack from the south while at the same time concentrating the main attack from the east. Following a 100-round 82mm and 60mm mortar preparation, the enemy assaulted under the cover of .50 caliber machine gun and 75mm recoilless rifle fire. The VC could not penetrate the Marine perimeter. In a "fiercely contested hand-to-hand encounter" the Marines halted the VC advance and forced the enemy to fall back. The 1st Battalion commander then maneuvered two companies to reinforce the contact, and block the enemy's withdrawal. The reinforcing companies immediately discovered and attacked the VC medical evacuation unit responsible for the removal of enemy casualties from the battlefield, killing another 16 and forcing the unit into "full disorganized retreat." Meanwhile, the rifle company which was initially hit conducted an aggressive counterattack, pursuing the VC battalion relentlessly. Two platoons of Marines maintained contact with the fleeing enemy. As the VC battalion retreated to the east, the 2d VNMC Battalion conducted a heliborne assault, reestablishing contact with the enemy in mid-afternoon. The action continued until 2300, when the VC broke contact. Total enemy losses were 95 killed and four captured, against 24 Marines killed.[8]

Brigade B, consisting of the 1st, 4th, and 5th VNMC Infantry Battalions and a battery of the 2d VNMC Artillery Battalion, accompanied by their American Marine advisors, participated in Operation Tran Hung Dao IX, the GVN incursion into Cambodia. The Marines joined the operation on 9 May 1970 when Amphibious Task Force 211, including Brigade B, moved up the Mekong River toward Phnom Penh. The 1st VNMC Infantry Battalion landed at 0950 south of

Neak Luong where intelligence reports indicated the enemy *MR 2 Headquarters* was located. Contact was immediately made and 23 VC/NVA were killed. Amphibious Task Force 211 continued north to the Neak Luong ferry site and the bulk of the brigade, was put ashore at 1400. The brigade established defensive positions on both sides of the ferry site while relieving the 14th ARVN Regiment. In a battalion-size contact on the 11th, the 4th Battalion killed 38 more enemy and captured numerous weapons and equipment, as well as four tons of small arms ammunition.

Elements of the 5th Battalion made contact with an estimated NVA battalion and regimental headquarters entrenched on Hill 147 in the vicinity of the village of Chaeu Kach on 14 May. The fight began when the pilots of the light observation helicopters of a U.S. Army air cavalry unit supporting the 5th Battalion saw a SKS rifle leaning against the wall of a building near the village. When the helicopters were fired upon, two platoons along with the battalion executive officer and the assistant battalion advisor were inserted about 500 meters south of Chaeu Kach.

Heavy fighting developed around 1650 with automatic weapons, recoilless rifle, and B-40 rocket fire concentrated against the platoons, while the command and control helicopter was taken under machine gun fire. The battle lasted through the night. Eight "Black Pony" (OV-10s) and 16 "Sea Wolf" (helicopter gunships) air strikes were flown by U.S. Navy units, enabling the Marines to consolidate their positions and continue to attack the hill. Fire support was also provided by the VNMC artillery battery supporting the 5th Battalion and by a Vietnamese C-47 equipped with Gatling guns. By 0830 on the 15th, despite heavy resistance, the objective was taken by the 5th Battalion. The enemy losses were 49 killed and one heavy machine gun, one B-40 rocket launcher, and numerous small arms, grenades, ammunition, and equipment captured. Vietnamese Marine losses were five killed and 10 wounded.[9]

On 28 May Brigade A, consisting of the 2d, 6th, 7th, and 8th VNMC Infantry Battalions and the 2d VNMC Artillery Battalion (-) (Rein), replaced Brigade B in the Neak Luong area of operation. From then until 4 June the Vietnamese Marines engaged the enemy in their most intense combat in Cambodia. The 2d Battalion conducted an assault on the 28th into Pre Veng, a provincial town just north of Neak Luong. During the ensuing six-day engagement, in which the 2d Battalion was reinforced by the 4th Battalion on the 29th, 295 NVA were killed and seven crew-served and numerous individual weapons were captured, while the VNMC suffered seven killed. In heavy house-to-house fighting, the VNMC employed supporting arms extensively with devastating effect. The heaviest contact in Pre Veng occurred between 0700 and 2000 on the 30th when the 2d Battalion killed 137 NVA. During this same period the 4th Battalion killed 32 more and captured nearly 1,700 rifles. Captain Edward O. Bierman, an American advisor, later recalled the importance of the operation to the VNMC:

LtGen Hoang Xuan Lam, Commanding General, I Corps, center of group and wearing beret, discusses Lam Son 719 operation with newsmen at Khe Sanh forward base. Col Francis W. Tief, Senior Marine Advisor to the VNMC, third from the left, looks on.

Courtesy of Col John G. Miller, USMC

Courtesy of Col John G. Miller, USMC

A U.S. base area near the Cambodian border is shown after all U.S. forces including Marine advisors have been ordered back to South Vietnam. The pig in the foreground, oblivious to less important matters, has found a comfortable mud hole in which to wallow.

Marine advisors, still assigned to Brigade B, were not allowed to accompany the VNMC during the battle because Pre Veng was just over the 25-mile limit.* The battle, however, served as a major test of the ability of the VNMC to operate independent of their advisors.[10]

After a relative lull in the fighting in the Neak Luong-Pre Veng area of operations in Cambodia, combat intensified from 14-16 June. The 2d Battalion was again drawn into action first. At 0145 on the 14th, 2d Battalion positions in the Pre Veng area were hit with about 100 82mm mortar rounds followed by an NVA ground assault. By daylight 43 NVA were dead, as were six Marines. The 7th Battalion was lifted by helicopter into blocking positions to the east and northeast of Pre Veng while the 2d Battalion was counterattacking on the morning of the 14th. Meanwhile, the 6th Battalion and artillery units began moving by road from Neak Luong to Pre Veng. The 6th Battalion arrived on the 15th. In position as the blocking force as the 2d Battalion pushed the retreating NVA towards them, the 7th Battalion killed another 63 enemy and captured 10 AK-47s, 1 Browning automatic rifle, a .50 caliber antiaircraft machine gun, and much ammunition. Contact ended on the morning of the 16th. In all 112 NVA were killed while the VNMC had 21 killed.[11]

In late June the VNMC changed the designation of its brigades which, under the revised system, were numbered according to the infantry battalions they included. Brigade B in July, for example, became Brigade 256, consisting of the 2d, 5th, and 6th Infantry Battalions.

In a staff change on 2 July, Colonel Francis W. Tief relieved Colonel Van Zuyen, assuming command of the MAU. His Assistant Senior Marine Advisor was Lieutenant Colonel Alexander P. McMillan, who had joined the MAU on 1 April 1970 when he relieved Lieutenant Colonel Tom D. Parsons. MAU strength was then 51 Marine officers, 7 NCOs, 1 PFC, and 2 Navy corpsmen.

*When allied forces entered Cambodia in the spring of 1970, American units and advisors were not permitted to penetrate the border more than 25 miles.

During July 1970 the VNMC participated in Operation Vu Ninh 12. Conducted in MR 1 under operational control of Quang Da Special Zone, Brigade 256 and its American Marine advisors began the operation on 14 July with the establishment of two fire support bases in the mountains 24 kilometers southwest of An Hoa Combat Base in Quang Nam Province. Called Base Area (BA) 112, this mountainous region, often covered by double and triple canopy, concealed a complex trail network along which the enemy operated one of "the most active logistical distribution points" in South Vietnam. BA 112 was a natural marshaling area and afforded the VC/NVA operating in the region a sanctuary, as well as lines of approach from which to launch rocket and ground attacks against allied units and installations in Da Nang and the populated lowlands of Quang Nam.

Intelligence reports preceding the operation suggested that large caches of supplies and equipment were located in BA 112. While numerous base camps of platoon and company size were destroyed, only light and sporadic contacts with the enemy were made, and the caches of arms, ammunition, and other supplies discovered were of moderate size. In addition, the 6th Battalion found an abandoned VC hospital containing small quantities of medical supplies.

The VC/NVA reacted with rocket and mortar attacks to the establishment of two more fire support bases in late July and early August as Vu Ninh 12 continued. In the only sizeable contact of the operation, the 6th VNMC Battalion repelled a VC ground attack, killing 26 and capturing five individual weapons and a 75mm recoilless rifle. A total of 59 enemy had been killed during the operation by the time Brigade 256 displaced to An Hoa Combat Base on 20 August.[12]

In late September 1970, the VNMC again redesignated its brigades numerically: Brigade A became 147, B became 258, and C became 369. These designations were permanent.

The VNMC relocated to the vicinity of Khe Sanh in northern I Corps in February 1971. Maneuvering as a division for the first time,* the VNMC was one of three RVNAF divisions and other assorted units slated to participate in Operation Lam Son 719, the GVN raid into Laos. This was the most significant operation during 1971, and perhaps the whole war to that date. Lam Son 719 would test the RVNAF's ability to coordinate and control corps-size forces in an area reputed to be an enemy stronghold. The results of Lam Son 719 would be mixed. In addition to encountering sizeable and fierce enemy opposition, which caused heavy casualties, the RVNAF would suffer from hesitant leadership and inexperienced staffs which proved unable to direct an operation of such magnitude and complexity. The RVNAF would also be handicapped by its inability adequately to coordinate supporting arms, particularly since U.S. advisors and liaison personnel were forbidden from accompanying the ARVN and VNMC into Laos. Overhead helicopterborne fire support coordinators (U.S. Marine advisors) were provided to the VNMC, but their presence was sporadic because of weather and helicopter availability. Consequently, fire support was inadequate during the most crucial phases of the operation.[13]

The Vietnamese Marine Corps in Lam Son 719

A South Vietnamese operation in Laos was conceived in late 1970 after intelligence reports indicated that NVA forces were preparing a big offensive in northern I Corps. Aerial reconnaissance missions reported an increase in troop and vehicular movement down the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Agents and POW interrogations pointed toward a large-scale attack sometime between the first of the year and mid-summer.

In December 1970, ComUSMACV, General Creighton W. Abrams, divulged his plan for an incursion into Laos to cut the enemy's lines of communication where the vast network of trails and roads comprising the Ho Chi Minh Trail passed through the city of Tchepone. In severing these lines, Lam Son 719 was intended temporarily to distract the enemy and delay any buildup of men and material for an anticipated offensive, thereby also facilitating the redeployment of American combat units during 1971.[14]

The GVN offensive into Cambodia, which began in April 1970, had established the precedent for cross-border operations, and Washington had agreed to a limited thrust into Laos. In January 1971 General Abrams approved a plan developed by a combined I Corps and XXIV Corps planning group. III MAF was not involved. The plan called for a four-phased operation in which the VNMC Division would be committed during Phase II.

*"This was the first time the VNMC was committed as a Division," observed Brigadier General Tief years later. "The ACMC (Assistant Commandant, Marine Corps) VNMC, Colonel Bui The Lan, was designated as the division commander. The MAU placed officers in key staff advisory positions. Overall the division staff functioned well. Strong rapport between MAU advisors and the VNMC was the key." BGen Francis W. Tief, Comments on draft ms, 13Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter Tief Comments.

Following Phase I of Lam Son 719, during which Route 9 was reopened from FSB Vandegrift, east of Khe Sanh, to the Laotian border, the 7th Battalion and a command group of Brigade 147 were inserted on 1 March by helicopter into the Marine AO in Laos, about 15 miles southwest of where Route 9 intersects with the Laotian border. Brigade 258, consisting of the 1st, 3d, and 8th Infantry Battalions and the 3rd Artillery Battalion, crossed the border on the 4th and 5th of March and began operations northeast of Brigade 147, just south of Route 9 along the plateau near the border of Laos and RVN. Although the VNMC was not accompanied by its American Marine advisors on the ground in Laos, advisors were frequently airborne in command and control Hueys in the vicinity of VNMC units. Captain Marshall N. Carter recalled:

> The MAU immediately established an advisor with an experienced VNMC officer as airborne coordinator (in an Army UH-1 command and control bird) during daylight hours. In the VNMC division combat operations center, we had another advisor constantly on the net assisting in coordinating artillery, helicopter support, airstrikes, etc. This worked very effectively during the entire operation.[15]

Operating out of FSB Delta, Brigade 147, which now included the 2d, 4th, and 7th Infantry Battalions, and 2d Artillery Battalion, encountered determined enemy resistance almost immediately. On 5 March the NVA attacked the 4th Battalion with mortars followed by a ground assault. Fighting throughout the day, the 4th Battalion killed 130 NVA (30 by air) and captured 20 weapons while suffering six Marines killed. The battalion killed 18 more on 6 March and discovered 100 enemy bodies in the area of a B-52 strike conducted the day before. The 4th Battalion killed another 38 in moderate to heavy contacts on the 8th and uncovered two mass graves containing 55 more NVA, including a company commander.[16]

The 2d Battalion of Brigade 147, patrolling southwest of FSB Delta, also made heavy contact on 7 March. Engaging an estimated two NVA companies at 1430, the battalion killed 145, including 47 killed by helicopter gunships. The 2d Battalion also captured large quantities of supplies and equipment while sustaining 14 killed and 91 wounded. The following afternoon the 7th Battalion of Brigade 147 engaged an NVA platoon, killing 11 without incurring any casualties of its own.

Brigade 258, with its CP at FSB Hotel, four to five miles northeast of Brigade 147, experienced lighter enemy activity. In a series of small-scale contacts from 6 to 8 March, units of Brigade 258 killed 46 NVA while suffering one Marine killed and 19 wounded. During the same period Brigade 369, consisting of the 5th and 9th Infantry Battalions and the 1st Artillery Battalion, patrolled the area around the Division CP at Khe Sanh out to three to four miles from the base itself,

During a ceremony at the Vietnamese Marine Thu Duc Training Center, troops stand in formation to receive awards for their participation in the Cambodian incursion. The following spring during Lam Son 719 in Laos, the Marines encountered stiff opposition.

Courtesy of Col John G. Miller, USMC

experiencing only light and sporadic contacts with the enemy which resulted in 10 kills.

Enemy response against individual and often widely separated South Vietnamese units in Laos, such as Brigade 147, followed a pattern. RVNAF units initially met light to moderate resistance on patrols, and their fire support bases were subjected to sporadic indirect fire attacks. The enemy then began to progressively build up forces around fixed positions, increasing indirect fire attacks and antiaircraft fire. Beginning around 18 March, the NVA had started to concentrate forces, estimated at two regiments, around FSB Delta. This enemy buildup coincided with the start of Phase III of Lam Son 719, the phased extraction of units from Laos, which was complicated by increasing NVA pressure against widely dispersed and, therefore, vulnerable South Vietnamese units.

Brigade 147 initially had occupied FSB Delta with one battalion securing the base and two battalions operating to the south. After its arrival, the brigade worked hard to improve defensive positions. On the 13th the first salvos of 130mm artillery rained down on Delta, and by the 17th the NVA had occupied "defilade positions" on Delta's steep slopes which were secure from small arms and indirect fire from the base. From these positions antiaircraft gunners fired on resupply and evacuation helicopters. Tactical air and gunships struck 10 active enemy gun positions, but the gunners would relocate and continue to attack the daily stream of helicopters which supported FSB Delta.[17]

On the 18th, outlying battalions began sweeping back toward Delta to clear enemy positions around the base. In one intense firefight that day, the 7th Battalion killed 95 NVA. The 4th and 7th Battalions, upon arrival at Delta, assumed essentially defensive positions because the NVA had so thoroughly invested the area. Compounding this dilemma the brigade commander consistently refused to clear artillery and air strikes within 1,000 meters of the base because of lack of confidence in the accuracy of his supporting arms.

NVA indirect fire attacks intensified progressively. Between 0700 and 1800 on the 19th, FSB Delta came under "heavy enemy fire" from 130mm artillery and 122mm mortars on six separate occasions, leaving six Marines dead and 39 wounded. By the 20th NVA soldiers were firing small arms at incoming helicopters from positions dug under the base's perimeter wire. Combining antiaircraft and indirect fire on Delta's landing zone, the NVA had virtually halted resupply and medical evacuation operations. Although Colonel Lan, the VNMC division commander directing operations from Khe Sanh, overrode the restrictions placed on the clearance of supporting fires by the commander of Brigade 147, the VNMC could not break the enemy siege.

At 0600 on the 21st, two NVA regiments, later identified by POWs as the *29th* and *803d* of the *324B Division*, launched a heavy ground attack against Delta, preceded by mortar fire and what appeared to be 75mm direct fire from tank guns. Despite the intense combat, seven helicopters landed during the day with resupplies, but all were hit and one destroyed. The fight raged on through the night.[18]

General Lam disapproved the Marines' request for evacuation of FSB Delta on the night of the 21st, but demanded the evacuation of artillery from the base, although helicopters had not been able to land. Lam also allocated 2,000 rounds of 8-inch and 5,000 rounds of 155mm artillery to support Brigade 147, but it was of no use. The assistant senior marine advisor, Lieutenant Colonel McMillan, later noted:

> At the point that General Lam finally committed long-range artillery support to assist in the extraction of the brigade from FSB Delta, . . . he was fully aware that all long-range artillery had already been withdrawn to a range that precluded their providing any support.[19]

Alluding to the friction between the I Corps commander and the Marine Division, Colonel Tief said that General Lam remarked, "Now the Marines will have to fight."*[20]

Years later McMillan recalled the troubled relationship between the I Corps commander and the Vietnamese Marines during this critical period:

> From the very outset of the retrograde operation, it was apparent that General Lam, the corps commander, was bent on isolating Brigade 147 on the battlefield. Perhaps it would be too strong to state that it was a deliberate effort to bloody the Marines. However, the fact [was] that the airborne, the rangers, and the 1st ARVN had all suffered grievously during the operation, [and] the Marines were the only unit achieving local battle success and still tactically intact; and the conscious refusals at corps level to provide any long-range artillery support to the brigade certainly lends credence to the conclusion that more than the fortunes of war were involved.[21]

*"This remark was a reflection of General Lam's personal animosity toward CMC-VNMC," recalled Brigadier General Tief. "It was unwarranted since the RVN Marines were the only ones who fought and won during Lam Son 719." Tief Comments.

The attack continued on the 22nd, and at 2000 10 enemy tanks, all equipped with flame throwers, joined the battle. The Marines destroyed three tanks within or near the perimeter—two by light antitank assault weapons, the other by an antitank mine. A fourth tank was destroyed south of the base by tactical air strikes. The ability to resupply the Marines remained extremely tenuous and two helicopters were shot down attempting to "free drop and parachute supplies."

Tactical air was employed in a desperate attempt to suppress enemy antiaircraft fire, and gunships fought to strip the sides of FSB Delta of the entrenched enemy. The NVA, nevertheless, penetrated the perimeter and consolidated positions in the center of the fire base.* The Marines were ordered to pull back from the center to either end of Delta and prepare to counterattack after a napalm strike. But the strike was diverted in favor of a higher priority mission and never arrived. At this time the brigade commander ordered his Marines to withdraw. "The order to withdraw was given by the division commander after consultation with CMC-VNMC and the SMA," recalled Colonel Tief. Brigade 258 was to secure a landing zone and provide a secure area for evacuation of Brigade 147.[22]

Brigade 147 then had to fight its way through two enemy base camps and nine NVA tanks in blocking positions while clashing repeatedly with NVA forces deployed in the streambeds leading to friendly lines. It was during this series of actions that I Corps and XXIV Corps refused to provide "8-inch or 155 support," Colonel Tief said later. "Brigade 258 had occupied the key terrain in the west valley" which XXIV Corps said could not be held. Denied the heavy artillery support the MAU felt was needed, "MAU and VNMC officers worked out an artillery support plan using the VNMC artillery units exclusively. It worked; the position was held."[23]

When the SMA was informed by the Army artillery liaison officer that the VNMC could have the requested heavy artillery, the SMA informed him that it was no longer necessary because Brigade 258 had been moved to a position from which it could provide artillery support. On the morning of the 23d, Brigade 147 broke through enemy lines and linked up with elements of Brigade 258 to the northeast. The 3rd Battalion of Brigade 258 secured a landing zone, and over the following 24 hours, Brigade 147 was lifted back to Khe Sanh.

The last elements of Brigade 258, which had encountered far less resistance during some 20 days in Laos, were withdrawn on 25 March. Small groups of Marines cut off in the withdrawal from Delta continued to filter out of Laos by foot. A group of 26 Marines fought their way out to rejoin the division at Khe Sanh on 27 March, leaving 37 missing of an original total of 134 when FSB Delta was evacuated.

During the siege and withdrawal from FSB Delta from 21-23 March, Marines estimated that 600 enemy were killed around the base by Brigade 147 and an estimated 400 were killed in a B-52 strike on the 21st. Some 200 individual weapons were captured and 100 destroyed as were 60 crew-served weapons. In addition to the missing, friendly casualties during the 21st and 22d of March were 60 Marines killed and 150 wounded. The close-in combat of the month had brutal effects on both sides. The Marine division as a whole from 1-27 March killed over 2,000 NVA and captured or destroyed over 800 weapons, while suffering 335 killed and 768 wounded.

Lam Son 719 had demonstrated the weaknesses of both the VNMC division and the ARVN assigned to General Lam's I Corps. At the command level, Colonel Lan, the VNMC division commander, was at first "reluctant to impose on the autonomy of the brigade commander," a practice "which had been buttressed by years of custom within the VNMC. This resulted in an inability to maintain an accurate assessment of the tactical and logistical situation, which in turn led to an inability to generate a cohesive plan for the division as a whole." The brigade commander's refusal to clear close supporting fires, bred by lack of confidence in the ability of VNMC artillery to compute and fire high-angle defensive fires, enabled the enemy to achieve fire superiority. "The brigade commander's inexplicable failure to launch aggressive ground action to clear the ground around FSB Delta" permitted the NVA to concentrate their antiaircraft fire to preclude aerial resupply, necessitating the withdrawal from Delta.[24]

Assessing the performance of the ARVN I Corps staff, the senior Marine advisor levelled some equally

*Lieutenant Colonel Marshall N. Carter years later recalled a dangerous situation which occurred at Delta because of a scheduled Arclight attack: "At one point one of the VNMC brigades had been driven off the firebase . . . at about midnight and into an area scheduled for a 2:00 AM arclight strike. It was with great difficulty that we were able to have the B-52s, only 30 minutes or so away from the target abort the mission. Had this not been done, the entire brigade would have been hit since they had moved into the 2-3 grid-square area of the arclight." LtCol Marshall N. Carter, Comments on draft ms, 28Mar83 (Vietnam Comment File).

Courtesy of Col John G. Miller, USMC

Col Francis W. Tief, who assumed command of the Marine Advisory Unit in June 1970, is shown with South Vietnamese officers at the U.S. Army 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) command post during Lam Son 719 asking for additional helicopter support.

stern criticism. Colonel Tief said that, while he understood the logic for the VNMC receiving a low priority for air support during the early stages of the operation, when the 1st ARVN and Airborne Divisions were heavily engaged, the low priority later came close to meaning "no priority." Tief added that only through his "direct appeals" did the situation improve, but even during the withdrawal phase of Lam Son 719, priority in assignment of tactical air went to the ARVN, "even though the resupply situation on FSB Delta was becoming critical." Corps artillery support was equally deficient because of a similar priority system. Tief concluded that the extreme conditions which demanded withdrawal might have been averted had Brigade 147 been given higher priority fire support before the enemy was preparing to breach the wire and had even occupied positions between FSB Delta and the withdrawal route to Brigade 258. In his after action report, Tief also suggested that RVNAF politics affected tactical operations: "The personal attitude of the CG, I Corps, toward the Marine division and the interplay between him and the Commandant of the VNMC were responsible for significant tactical considerations, without doubt. The extent to which political decisions overrode tactical ones is difficult to gauge."[25]

Summarizing the operation, Colonel Tief lauded the Marines of the division:

> The combat units of the Marine Division performed admirably in the face of the strongest enemy forces they have yet encountered. Brigade 147, the most severely tested, has taken great pride in the way it came out of Laos. Troops were improvising equipment items—packs [made] from sandbags and communications wire—in order to return to action immediately. Brigade 258 performed well under steady, if less spectacular pressure. Brigade 369 . . . was never committed. . . . It experienced . . . little contact in its AO west of Khe Sanh.[26]

The SMA went on to say that "the brighest spots in the action at FSB Delta were the performances of

the individual Marines and their company and battalion level leadership." The three battalion commanders, though wounded, retained unit integrity while fighting their way to link-up with Brigade 258. "Within 24 hours after returning to Khe Sanh, the battalions of Brigade 147 were operational and redeployed in the hills southwest of the division CP—and in contact with the enemy."[27]

The Marine Advisory Unit and Solid Anchor

Ca Mau Peninsula, "unmatched in desolation," is on the southern tip of South Vietnam in An Xuyen Province. Essentially a mangrove swamp with trees rising to 60 feet and triple canopy covering a tidal floor, the peninsula remains inundated at high tide and during the rainy season. Overland transportation south of Ca Mau City is virtually impossible. Boats and aircraft are required for any degree of mobility. South of the Cua Lon River, the inhabitants are Viet Cong, their families, and refugees from Nam Can Village, which was destroyed in the wake of the 1968 Tet Offensive. Numerous defoliated strips of jungle south of the Cua Lon served to reinforce the impression of uninhabitability.

The Cua Lon and its tributaries, nevertheless, are rich in seafood, and growing throughout the region is an indigenous tree that produces the highest quality charcoal found in Vietnam, making the area lucrative for those who would work it. Because of the difficulty of ground operations south of the Cua Lon, the VC operating there were essentially unchallenged. As late as mid-1970 this portion of An Xuyen Province was exempt from the pacification goals assigned the commanding general of Military Region 4.

ComNavForV established an advanced tactical support base, called Sea Float, on the Cua Lon River near Nam Can in 1968. Sea Float consisted of several

Several U.S. Marine Advisors pose at the Khe Sanh Combat Base in the spring of 1971 during Operation Lam Son 719. From left to right: Maj John G. Miller; Maj William C. Stroup; Maj Thomas G. Adams, partially hidden; and Maj Frederic L. Tolleson.

Courtesy of Col John G. Miller, USMC

AMMI* pontoon barges lashed together in a cluster in mid-stream. The base provided logistical support for U.S. Navy river patrol operations in An Xuyen Province. By early 1970, the base's vulnerability had become a "matter of mounting concern." Though the base had not been attacked, during a two-month period in the spring of 1970 eight VC swimmer-sappers were killed by concussion grenades, which had been thrown from the barges about every 15 minutes. A land base was designed to replace Sea Float to provide a more inhabitable and operable installation, as well as one that could be better defended.

The planned facility ashore would include a 250x600-meter cantonment. Built on "a 17 million dollar sand pile," the new base was named Solid Anchor. The installation was almost complete in August 1970. By September all operations were moved ashore, and Sea Float was discontinued. In early 1971 construction of a 3,000-foot runway on Solid Anchor was finished, in addition to large storage areas, a pad for the helicopter detachment (Sea Wolves), and many boat mooring spaces.[28] Ships as large as LSTs could easily come up river to Solid Anchor, and a U.S. Navy LST-type logistic support ship was maintained for many months there.[29]

Since 1968 the Navy had conducted waterborne operations from Sea Float, employing river patrol craft to raid VC units. At no time were allied ground forces operating for prolonged periods in the Sea Float AO. While the 21st ARVN made occasional forays into the drier areas of the province, its units never stayed long because the tides made the terrain so marginally habitable. Not until the fall of 1970 did ComNavForV consider improving the offensive and defensive capability of what in 1970 had become known as Solid Anchor by basing an infantry battalion there. The 6th VNMC Battalion and an artillery battery arrived at Solid Anchor in early September and immediately moved into the AO and began operating against an enemy who tried to stand and fight rather than evade. Despite the 6th Battalion's success in killing some 85 VC in the first two months of operations, however, Solid Anchor continued to be troubled by a host of operational and organizational difficulties.

A more incongruous and diverse grouping of units in a relatively small command could not have been found outside of Solid Anchor. In addition to the newly arrived VNMC units, the melange included Seabees, Sea Wolves, SEALS, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams, and combat service support units. OV-10 "Black Ponies," Sea Lords (riverine forces), and administrative and logistic helicopters were also based there.

The Solid Anchor cantonment was defended by about 70 Vietnamese irregular infantry and an equal number of CIDGs. Special Forces advisors and a handful of Kit Carson Scouts, who frequently accompanied the SEAL teams on patrol, further diversified the organization of the base. When in mid-summer 1970 ComNavForV, Vice Admiral Jerome H. King, decided the Solid Anchor population of 600-700 and the $78 million real estate investment warranted increased security, the MAU sent advisors to Solid Anchor to develop and implement a coordinated base defense plan and to instruct the Vietnamese in the use of the 81mm mortar. An additional advisor was assigned to the staff of Rear Admiral Herbert S. Matthews, Deputy, ComNavForV, who was also the advisor to the deputy CNO of the VNN. Although the MAU developed "an explicit detailed plan," the Solid Anchor command struggled through most of the fall to coordinate tactical operations.[30]

Solid Anchor had also been plagued with a series of personnel and logistic problems. These alone were sufficient to have "tried the patience of any responsible commander."[31] Because of the austerity of Solid Anchor existence, U.S. Navy personnel assigned there were assembled from other in-country units and ordered to Nam Can for 90 days temporary additional duty. Major John G. Millet, MAU G-3, observed that "this resulted, predictably, in a universal short timer's attitude and all its associated evils." Living conditions, which included electrical power and running water, were quite comfortable within the cantonment. But the isolation of the base and transitory nature of the personnel created an atmosphere of loneliness and martyrdom "thick enough to cut with a knife." The G-3 Advisor noted further that the organization of Solid Anchor was, in effect, a coalition of allied military units operating semi-autonomously:

> The SEALS and Sea Wolves in particular tended to operate with an unwarranted spirit of independence. The VNN was in a class by itself, exhibiting a blatant disregard for practically everything except personal comfort and safety. The VNN's lack of discipline was manifested most frequently in failure to carry out operational orders and haphazard firing into friendly unit AOs.[32]

*Named for its inventor, Dr. Amirikan. An improvement over the World War II pontoon barge, it was used lashed together in groups that became helipads, living facilities, and logistical bases.

Courtesy of Col John G. Miller, USMC

U.S. Marine Maj William H. Dabney is shown at Dong Ha talking on a field telephone before the beginning of Operation Lam Son 719 into Laos.

Relations between the U.S. and Vietnamese Navies were tense, and because of weak leadership at all levels, "VNN forces never functioned effectively."[33] In a message to the Commander of Solid Anchor, the commander of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74 complained of the conduct of the irregular troops. Not only had they been caught stealing the Seabees clothes, breaking into their mess lines, and walking into the mechanic shops with armed hand grenades, the Vietnamese had beaten up three Seabees.*[34]

To begin to shore up the many problems at Solid Anchor, in October, Admiral King, "with the agreement of Rear Admiral Tran Van Chon, the VNN CNO, sent Captain Eugene I. Finke, USN, the Senior Naval Advisor to the VNN, on temporary duty to command CTG 116.1 at Solid Anchor." Captain Finke used his extensive experience in dealing with the Vietnamese to begin to restore order and discipline while increasing the scope of combat operations. In late November Captain Finke was recalled to Saigon to resume his primary duties as Senior Naval Advisor. Admiral King replaced Captain Finke with the SMA, Colonel Tief, "on the basis of his experience in ground and amphibious warfare, with the mission of intensifying offensive operations against the VC in the Solid Anchor AO."[35]

When Colonel Tief assumed command, he discovered that mending Solid Anchor's many problems would not be a simple task. "The area resembled a zoo," recalled Colonel Tief. "Nobody was truly in charge. Internal wrangling was rife."[36] The 6th VNMC battalion commander, for example, encamped across the river from Solid Anchor, refusing to allow his troops onto the base or to allow Vietnamese from other units into his camp. Captain Marshall N. Carter, the MAU assistant G-3 Advisor, was also critical of the apparent lack of military discipline within TG 116.1:

> The uniform of the day was anything the individual wanted to wear. The NCO watch standers appeared in sandals, peace symbols, headbands, and cutoff dungarees or civilian trousers. This atmosphere existed for several days and then ceased. The problem of low level leadership continued throughout the SMA's tour and without his very strong leadership at all levels the situation would have been tragic.[37]

Aside from the personnel and morale problems which lingered, there were operational concerns which posed an even more direct threat to the security of the base. The infantry, artillery, naval, and air units operating in the Solid Anchor AO needed fire support coordination "of the most professional sort." The lowest level where this coordination could be provided was by the commander of Solid Anchor, CTG 116.1, but effective coordination had been hindered by lack of experienced people to organize and man a naval operations center (NOC), differences in operating procedures of units working in the AO, and by the "reluctance on the part of some units to have their activities coordinated." To begin correcting the deficiencies the SMA brought with him a captain from the MAU to be the ground operations officer and added another advisor to the 7th VNMC Battalion,* which had replaced the 6th in November, because most of the ground operations were of company size.[38]

*Vice Admiral Jerome H. King, Commander Naval Forces, Vietnam, later noted that "on 9 December, because of insubordinate conduct, the VNN EOD personnel departed Solid Anchor for Saigon on orders of the VNN Chief of Naval Operations to face disciplinary charges." King Comments.

*Colonel Tief observed later that the replacement of the 6th VNMC Battalion with the 7th was a good move because the "battalion commander was aggressive and experienced." Tief comments.

Recognizing the chaotic state of the Solid Anchor command, Colonel Tief reorganized the staff, setting up an N-1, N-2, N-3, N-4—personnel, intelligence, operations, logistics sections—and established a base defense officer and a base commander. The N-2, N-3, and base defense officers were Marines from NavForV. Under N-3, infantry patrols were now coordinated by a ground operations officer from the MAU and surface operations by a Navy officer. According to Captain Carter, who was made ground operations officer, "the main purpose of consolidation of the staff was to get people into responsible positions and knock off all the bullshit that had been going on for months where no one would accept responsibility for actions and operations poorly run and poorly coordinated."*[39]

Under Colonel Tief, operational planning became "quite detailed" and coordination "quite complex." The assets and capabilities of all the units, American and Vietnamese, were carefully integrated to make the Solid Anchor command more tactically effective. A typical battalion operation might employ Army and Navy aircraft, American and Vietnamese Navy river craft, naval gunfire ships, and aerial observers, as well as the 7th VNMC Battalion. "The operational level was purposely kept high to keep the enemy confused," said Captain Carter. "Large troop movements were made into the Dam Sol Secret Zone," which had not been entered previously by allied forces.[40] Colonel Tief later recalled the efforts of the organizational and operational initiatives:

> The U.S. advisors began to function in high gear, with MAU officers setting the example. The advisory team blossomed. The Sea Wolves detachment (U.S. Navy helicopters) was outstanding. They performed way beyond expectations, flying all missions and wreaking havoc with the VC throughout the AO . . . areas that had not been entered in years by RVN were attacked. The Nam Can area became a poor refuge for the VC. Nam Can village grew to 2 times its earlier size. Charcoal and shrimp, the major products of the area, began moving to the city market north of the AO . . . in short, the Solid Anchor situation got cleared up. The base finally began to serve the purpose for which it had been built.[41]

When he took command of Solid Anchor in December, Colonel Tief requested an additional VNMC battalion* to allow operations by CTG 116.1 at some distance from Solid Anchor without weakening the base defense. The Vietnamese JGS denied his request and at the same time indicated "impatience" with Major General Nghi, commanding general of the 21st ARVN Division, for his "slowness in replacing the Marines with forces from his own assets—delaying the Marines' return to the JGS reserve role." By the end of January 1971, a 250-man ARVN battalion, "battle-weary from fighting in the U Minh Forest," was sent to Nam Can to replace the 7th VNMC Battalion.[42]

Rear Admiral Matthews and Major General Nghi worked out "a curious command relationship agreement in which CTG 116.1 had operational control of the battalion, but Major General Nghi had 'supervision.' In other words, the battalion commander would have a clearly defined channel of appeal if he didn't like the orders issued to him by CTG 116.1." Although the ARVN battalion performed well in its first two operations under the SMA's control,** Colonel Tief "felt this to be an untenable command situation, stating so verbally and by message to ComNavForV." While the controversy boiled, the Chief of Staff, 21st ARVN Division, "logged a false accusation of disrespect against the SMA, which was passed" through DepComUSMACV to ComNavForV "along with a request for the SMA's relief as CTG 116.1. ComNavForV acquiesced."[43]

Admiral King later said that his deputy, Rear Admiral Matthews, "attempted to resolve the personal and command relationship problems between the CG, 21st ARVN Division, and Colonel Tief, but both officers had taken positions from which they could not retreat." Admiral King reasoned that "since the survival of Solid Anchor depended upon support from the 21st ARVN Division," the "political" impasse had to be ended. Noting that Colonel Tief had "accomplished his basic mission of strengthening the defensive posture and intensifying offensive activities at Solid Anchor," Admiral King relieved him with Cap-

*Years later Carter said that MAU personnel "were just getting things sorted out when Tief was relieved for political reasons." Carter comments.

*Command relations at Solid Anchor were complex and created continuous problems during Colonel Tief's brief assignment as CTG 116.1. When Colonel Tief assumed command, there were at least two additional oddities: a Marine was in command of a naval base, and for the first time a VNMC unit was under operational control of a VNMC advisor.

**Colonel Tief reported that the "ARVN battalion commander and his U.S. Army advisor both acknowledged that there was no difficulty in their operating under CTG 116.1 operational control. The political problem was originated and fueled at the 21st ARVN Division CP." Tief Comments.

Courtesy of Col John G. Miller, USMC

A panoramic view of the Cau Mau Peninsula Solid Anchor Project. Solid Anchor was an Advanced Naval Tactical Base to support river patrol activities in An Xuyen Province in South Vietnam, with Col Francis W. Tief, the Senior Marine Advisor, in command.

tain Robert E. Spruit, USN, on 25 January 1971. Tief immediately returned to his duties as Senior Marine Advisor. Solid Anchor, though only partially complete, was turned over to the Vietnamese Navy on 1 Aptil 1971.[44]

Sub-Unit 1, 1st Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company

When U.S. Army units followed the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade into Vietnam in 1965, a naval gunfite support requirement ensued.* In response, Sub-Unit One, 1st ANGLICO was activated in Hawaii on 20 May 1965 and flown to Saigon, reporting in-country on 29 May "with two shore fire control parties (each comprised of a liaison team and a spot team), an additional naval gunfire spot team, two radar beacon teams (shipping navigational aids), and ancillary support personnel." Initially comptised of 12 officers and 98 enlisted Matines, Sub-Unit One reached an operational peak in 1968 when it had teams deployed at 27 locations in Vietnam, including a 118-man air/naval gunfire platoon supporting the ROK Brigade.[45]

In January 1970, the 21 Marine and 9 Navy officers, and the 192 enlisted Marines and 2 Navy enlisted men of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas H. Simpson's Sub-Unit One were deployed in 24 locations from northern I Corps to the Ca Mau peninsula. Among the units supported by naval gunfire liaison and spot teams were the 1st ARVN Division forward CP at Dong Ha; the 1st Brigade of the 5th Infantry Division (Mech), U.S. Army, in Quang Tri; XXIV Corps in Phu Bai; the 2d ROKMC Brigade, in Hoi An; the Naval Advisory Group in the Rung Sat Special Zone; the 1st Australian Task Force in Nui Dat; and the 21st ARVN Division in Ca Mau.[46]

*The primary mission of ANGLICO is to support a U.S. Army or allied division, or elements thereof, by providing the control and liaison agencies associated with the ground elements of the landing force in the amphibious assault, or in other type operations where support is provided by naval gunfire and/or naval air. ". . . Control and liaison teams are further assigned to lower echelons . . . to provide the necessary personnel and communications . . . to request, direct, and control the support. . . . The teams are qualified to enter combat by means of parachute." FMF Manual 7-2.

Since most of the fighting in Vietnam was concentrated around the heavily populated coastal regions, naval gunfire had proven a ready and flexible means of support. Mobility and speed of naval ships allowed for rapid massing of fire at any point or area target, provided that sufficient naval gunfire ships were patrolling Vietnam's coastline. Naval gunfire was available around the clock and, unlike air support, was relatively unaffected by inclement weather. In addition, it offered a wide selection of firepower, from the 81mm mortars of river patrol boats to the 16-inch rifles of the USS *New Jersey*. The 5-inch multiple rocket launchers of inshore fire support ships were also used a great deal in Vietnam, particularly in MR 1 where a shallow beach gradient kept deeper draft ships out of bombardment range. The mainstay of naval gunfire support throughout the war, however, was the 5-inch gun of American destroyers, which alternated between fire support and carrier escort duty.

Seventh Fleet, which controlled the naval gunfire ships, was a separate command from MACV, hence, a "unique" procedure for fire support evolved. Within the Seventh Fleet's cruiser-destroyer group, a designated task unit provided MACV with fire support ships. Composition of the unit varied as ships came from and went to other operational or repair and replenishment commitments. But the command element—called gunline commander—remained relatively constant. This was usually a destroyer squadron or division commander.

Based on priorities set by MACV for each of the four military regions, the gunline commander published periodic ship availability messages. These messages reflected ship assignments or changes to the gunfire support unit, as well as when and where naval gunfire was to be employed. After receipt of the message, and at least 48 hours before the scheduled arrival of the support ship, the senior U.S. military commander, advised by the naval gunfire liaison officer in the MR being supported, assigned inbound ships to specific fire support areas and furnished spotter identification and radio frequencies.

The naval gunfire liaison officer/spotter supporting the designated ground combat unit briefed the ship as it reported on station. The report included friendly positions and scheme of maneuver, general enemy situation, anticipated gun employment, trajectory, and friendly aircraft coordination measures, rules of engagement, navigational aids, and communications. From then on a triangular relationship was maintained among the ship, spotter, and the liaison team collocated with the supported unit's fire support coordination center.[47]

To improve the quality of naval gunfire support provided through this complex arrangement, two successive gunline commanders came ashore in February 1970 for extensive briefings from Sub-Unit One representatives. In addition, the weapons officer from CTG 70.8, which was then providing naval gunfire, visited with the ANGLICO staff in Da Nang, and the TG's "representative in conventional ordnance fire control" traveled throughout "a good portion of Vietnam attempting to trouble-shoot for the ships on the gunline."[48] Despite these liaison visits, however, effective fire support was not always provided. During March 1970, for example, Colonel Simpson reported that the problems were caused "as a result of frequent changes in gunline commanders, approximately every three weeks." Noting that the gunline commander has the prerogative to move ships into any position he chooses to provide support, Colonel Simpson observed that since the gunline commander is not familiar with the ground tactical situation, he should "logically rely upon the Corps NGLO's [naval gunfire liaison officer] request for support to base his decision." To correct the problem, Colonel Simpson recommended that the tours of gunline commanders at a station be increased to a minimum of three months.[49]

Aside from coordination difficulties with the Navy and the in-bore explosion problems caused by some defective 5"/54 ammunition, Sub-Unit One—in conjunction with supporting ships—provided generally reliable support throughout the four corps areas from January 1970 to June 1971. In July, for example, ANGLICO naval gunfire spot teams controlled the firing of 19,102 rounds during 3,356 missions, accounting for 5 confirmed enemy dead, 23 estimated dead, and 70 secondary explosions. An average of four destroyers and one cruiser were on station most of the month. ANGLICO forward air controllers controlled 66 close air support missions, delivering 13,000 pounds of ordnance, which resulted in eight enemy confirmed dead, four estimated dead, and caused one secondary explosion.

Support provided by the air/naval gunfire platoon which was assigned to the ROKMC brigade in Hoi An included the full breadth of ANGLICO capabilities. Besides planning, coordinating, and controlling naval gunfire and close air support, the platoon coordinated all forms of helicopter support—medevac, assault lift, resupply, control of armed helicopters, and the complete range of helicopter support team operations.

Each battalion tactical air control party (TACP) maintained two-man landing zone control teams with each of the ROKMC rifle companies, affording them the only direct English-speaking link with American combat and combat service support. During July the TACP with the brigade controlled 59 medevacs and over 2,700 resupply missions, delivering over 3,000,000 pounds of supplies.[50]

ANGLICO Marines earned the praise of the 2nd ROKMC Brigade in August 1970. During Operations Golden Dragon 6-2 and 6-3, which were initiated by the 2nd and 3rd ROKMC Battalions and accounted for 38 VC/NVA killed, Marine TACPs controlled heavy air support for Korean maneuver units. In addition, one ANGLICO Marine performed heroically when a Huey gunship providing suppressive fire was shot down during a medevac.

Lance Corporal K. K. Rabidou distinguished himself by sprinting to the downed aircraft through a heavily boobytrapped area while ignoring small arms fire. At the site of the crash he pulled three of the crewmen's bodies out of the burning helicopter in spite of rockets and ammunition being in danger of "'cooking off.' Unfortunately, the crewmen were dead." Rabidou received the Bronze Star Medal for his actions.[51]

With the takeover of III MAF's command responsibilites in I Corps by XXIV Corps in March 1970, Sub-Unit One's NGLO, located with XXIV Corps in Phu Bai assumed responsibility for naval gunfire support for all of I Corps, which had previously been coordinated by the III MAF NGLO. The III MAF/I Corps NGLO billet was then eliminated following the XXIV Corps-III MAF command shifts, and from then on Sub-Unit One controlled all naval gunfire support in Vietnam.

June 1971 saw the rotation of about a quarter of Sub-Unit One personnel. This necessitated an increase in training and, with the reduction of liaison teams supporting allied units throughout the four military regions, caused a temporary 10 percent shortage of enlisted personnel. Even with this limitation, Sub-Unit One was able to meet its requirements.

Throughout 1970, Sub-Unit One had coordinated missions for allied units which accounted for over 325 confirmed VC/NVA killed while estimating an additional 400 killed. As combat generally declined in 1971 with the gradual redeployment of American forces, so did the activity of ANGLICO units progressively decline. Air/naval gunfire missions fell in May to 577, accounting for 15 enemy killed, and in June to 576, resulting in only two enemy killed. Sub-Unit One deployed 20 Marine officers and 147 enlisted men, and 8 naval officers and 2 enlisted men at 14 locations in the four corps areas at the end of June. When Lieutenant Colonel D'Wayne Gray* relieved Lieutenant Colonel Eugene E. Shoults in July 1971, following the redeployment of 3d MAB, the last Fleet Marine Force element in South Vietnam was Sub-Unit One.[52]

The Special Landing Force

The last Special Landing Force operation of the war was Defiant Stand, a combined 2d ROKMC Brigade and 26th Marines amphibious operation on Barrier Island, 20 miles south of Da Nang, from 7-19 September 1969. With the redeployment of the 3d Marine Division in the fall of 1969, areas of operation of remaining allied units in I Corps were adjusted, necessitating that all three battalions of the 26th Marines, which had formerly rotated SLF duties, operate ashore in the Da Nang TAOR until the regiment redeployed in Keystone Blue Jay. As a consequence the 3d Marine Division, now headquartered on Okinawa, provided the battalion landing teams for the SLF which had returned to the mission of Pacific Command reserve.[53]

During 1970 and 1971 the 3d Marine Division provided two SLFs for the two amphibious ready groups (ARGs) which constituted the Pacific Command reserve. The 9th Marines rotated its battalions to SLF duty, from January 1970 to June 1971, with one BLT afloat at a time. Embarking from Okinawa and training ashore, primarily in the Philippines, the SLFs spent an average of two days a month off the coast of Vietnam, usually in the South China Sea or the Gulf of Tonkin. ARG/SLF readiness normally required the first BLT to be able to go ashore in Vietnam within 120 hours. The second BLT, which was usually not afloat, would take much longer. But even when ARG/SLF Bravo** stood down from January-May 1971 so that ARG Bravo shipping could be used to redeploy units in Vietnam, CinCPacFlt said that SLF Bravo "could be landed in Vietnam, by ARG Alfa, 168 hours after its own SLF was landed," should the need arise.[54]

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*Lieutenant General Gray in 1984 was Chief of Staff, Headquarters Marine Corps.

**The 4th Marines provided a second BLT during the last 18 months of large-scale operations in Vietnam. While 4th Marines BLTs occasionally passed through Vietnam waters, they spent much time ashore in Okinawa and were never committed to support operations from January 1970 to June 1971.

The 9th Marines rotated different battalions to SLF duty about every three months in 1970-1971. Once deployed from Okinawa, the monthly cycle of the ARG/SLF usually included taking ready station in Vietnam's coastal waters for two or more days, either preceded or followed by an amphibious landing or an administrative unloading in the Philippines and about a week of training ashore. On 5 August 1970, for example, Lieutenant Colonel Gerald H. Polakoff's 2d Battalion, 9th Marines embarked from White Beach, Okinawa as the ground element of Colonel William F. Saunders, Jr.'s, ARG/SLF Alpha. Along with Lieutenant Colonel Robert G. Miller's Medium Helicopter Squadron (HMM) 164 (Rein) on board ARG shipping, the SLF took station off the coast of Vietnam from 10-11 August. The ARG then steamed to the Philippines where the 2d Battalion offloaded for training at the SLF Camp from mid- to late August, reembarking on 30 August. ARG/SLF monthly cycles were occasionally altered with visits to other ports.[55]

From January to March 1971, the SLF, which had been redesignated to the 31st Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) in late 1970, provided limited support for two operations in Vietnam, which differed from its normal monthly posting in Vietnam's coastal waters. The flagship of ARG Alpha (TG 76.4) USS *Iwo Jima* (LPH 2) and the USS *Cleveland* (LPD 7) lent minor helicopter and communications assistance to the ARVN in Operation Cuu Long 44/02 in MR 4 during mid-January. Marine Helicopters of Lieutenant Colonel Herbert M. Herther's HMM-165, operating from the *Iwo Jima*, flew a few logistical missions "between the *Iwo Jima* and the *Cleveland*, or between the ships and Phu Quoc Island," which is in the Gulf of Thailand just off the coast of Cambodia. No SLF ground forces participated in the operation, and no Marine casualties were sustained.[58]

The 31st MAU also participated in Operation Lam Son 719* in February and March 1971, feinting an amphibious raid in the vicinity of the NVA airfield at Vinh, located along the coast of North Vietnam, in "order to influence a change in the disposition of enemy forces operating in Southern NVN [North Vietnam]." The 31st MAU was ordered to begin an emergency backload on 1 February on board ARG Alpha shipping, the full nature of the alert not yet having been received. Colonel Lawrence A. Marousek, the MAU commander, conferred with Rear Admiral Walter D. Gaddis, CTF-76, on board the USS *Paul Revere* (APA 248) on 6 February regarding the SLF's role in Lam Son 719 and that same day published an operation order with the following mission statement:

> . . . conduct raid against air facilities at Vinh airfield . . . alternate mission is to conduct raid against Port of Quang Khe to destroy one or more of the following: ferry . . . SW Radar Site . . . Cuu Dinh POL storage and terminal facilities south . . . and to interdict lines of communication.

The concept of operations of the order specified that the "length of time ashore [would be] less than 24 hours" and restricted to daylight hours. Lieutenant Colonel Francis X. Frey, commanding the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, and Lieutenant Colonel Herther, not knowing until long after embarkation that the raid would be a feint, extended rotation tour dates* of their Marines until special operations in conjunction with Lam Son 719 were complete.[57]

Daily rehearsals were conducted from a holding area in the Gulf of Tonkin from 17 February to 6 March. The rehearsals included extensive communications exercises for the MAU and ARG staffs and mock assault lifts, without boarding helicopter teams, from the *Iwo Jima* and *Cleveland*. On 4 March, Admiral Bernard A. Clarey (CinCPacFlt), Vice Admiral Maurice F. Weisner (ComSeventhFlt) and Rear Admiral Gaddis (CTF-76) received a briefing and observed rehearsals and then, satisfied, departed. The ARG Alpha/31st MAU role in Lam Son 719 was terminated on 7 March when ARG Alpha steamed for Okinawa where 1st Battalion, 9th Marines would replace the 3d Battalion.[58]

Following the feint at Vinh during Lam Son 719, the 31st MAU returned to its usual monthly cycle from March through June when the 3d MAB finally redeployed. Only from mid- to late May was the cycle appreciably altered when at the request of CinCPacFlt the MAU was placed on 72-hour response time rather than 120. This temporary adjustment resulted from FMFPac's desire to have the SLF "backstop" 3d MAB while it was standing down. As a prelude to CinCPacFlt's decision, Major General Arthur H. Adams, Deputy Commanding General, FMFPac, advised Lieutenant General William K. Jones, Commanding General, FMFPac, on 23 April that 3d MAB was concerned about its increasing vulnerability to enemy attack from 8 May onward as principal MAB combat units (1st Marines, VMA-311, VMA(AW)-225) stood down for increment VII redeployment. Adams said

*For details on Lam Son 719 see Chapter 11.

*In 1970-1971 the standard overseas tours for Fleet Marine Force Marines was 12 months.

that the MAB's ability to defend itself was much reduced during the final redeployment period. Accordingly, Lieutenant General Jones informed Lieutenant General Robertson, Commanding General, III MAF, that he was "concerned about the possibility of VC/NVA initiated actions directed at inflicting a significant loss upon 3d MAB during the critical embarkation period of Increment VII." Jones recommended that at the 26-30 April Seventh Fleet Conference, plans be made to ensure that American forces were in the "best possible posture" to respond quickly and effectively to needs in Vietnam.[59]

Admiral Clarey requested that ARG Alpha/31st MAU assume a 72-hour reaction time to MR 1 beginning 12 May, subject to continuing evaluation of risks in I Corps as 3d MAB redeployed and the Army's 196th Brigade assumed responsibility for security of the entire Da Nang TAOR. Operating under this new requirement, the 31st MAU commanded by Colonel Robert R. Dickey III, including the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Fitz W. M. Woodrow, Jr., and Lieutenant Colonel Alvah J. Kettering's HMM-164, reloaded from the Zambales Training Area in the Philippines and sailed for RVN waters on board ships of ARG Alpha on 19 May.[60] The 31st MAU took station in Vietnam's coastal waters on 21 May and was then directed to conduct "a communications exercise, and flight operations using maximum helicopters available" to accentuate the MAU presence in Vietnam waters during what was considered a critical period. Concurrent with 31st MAU's operations off the coast, Colonel Dickey and Caprain J. O'Neil, CTG 76.4, flew from the flagship, USS *New Orleans* (LPH 11), to make a liaison visit with Major General Armstrong, Commanding General, 3d MAB, in Da Nang. Following this visit and the completion of amphibious exercises at sea, the ARG steamed for Taiwan.[61]

From 1-30 June 1971, the 72-hour response time for the SLF was again extended to the normal 120 hours as the 3d MAB population ashore dwindled and the 196th Brigade became progressively more familiar with defense plans for the Da Nang TAOR.[62] The SLF played an important role, particularly during March-June 1971, although it was never committed ashore. General Armstrong later noted:

> . . . I must say this: It was always a comfort to ComUSMACV, particularly during the withdrawal phase. I remember an awful lot of message traffic in which the commander of MACV was reluctant to let the SLF get very far away when people were closing down along the beach. He wanted . . . the flexibility where he could run the SLF up and down the coast and quickly put it where it could be used. I think that's the best argument you could make for it.[63]

Marines on the MACV Staff

The Marine Corps was well represented among the principal staff positions in MACV during 1970-1971. Brigadier General William F. Doehler, Deputy J-3, MACV, headed the list of senior Marine officers in key staff billets in late 1970 and early 1971. Other officers among the 245 Marines in MACV* in January 1971 were Colonel Jack W. Dindinger, Director, Combined Intelligence Center, J-2; Colonel Robert R. Baker, Chief, Special Operations Division; Colonel David A. Clement, Chief, Research and Analysis Division; Colonel James P. Kelly, Chief Plans and Requirements Division, J-4; Colonel Joseph Koler, Jr., Chief, U.S. and SEATO Division, J-4; Colonel Verle E. Ludwig, Deputy Information Officer; Colonel Anthony Walker, Chief of the Command Center; and Colonel Francis W. Tief, Senior Marine Advisor, Navy Advisory Group.[64]

The size of Marine representation, officers and enlisted men, on the MACV staff varied during the course of the war. In March 1966, a year after the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade landed at Da Nang, 41 officers and 45 enlisted Marines served on the staff. A year later the Marine Corps had 82 officers and 199 enlisted Marines assigned. In January 1969 total Marine strength on the MACV staff had fallen to 157, then jumped to 278 the next year. From that point forward, during the final 18 months of III MAF redeployment, Marine represenration generally declined, leaving 186 Marine officers and enlisted men by 30 June 1971.[65]

Marine officers on the MACV staff characterized interservice relationships as very professional during this period and, generally, devoid of service parochialism for a number of reasons. "We all got along very well,"

*Marines in MACV during this period were divided into MACV staff and MACV field positions, the great majority of which were in the staff category. One unique field group, however, was the Republic of Korea Liaison Team under Marine Major Russell Lloyd, Jr., consisting of three officers and 10 enlisted Marines. Formerly attached to the Force Logistic Command, the team was transferred from III MAF to MACV in April 1971. The team coordinated the shifting of the responsibility for logistic support of the Korean Marines from the III MAF FLC to the U.S. Army Support Command, Da Nang. According to Major Lloyd, his team "supported 7,200 ROK Marines and ROK Army personnel collocated with the [Korean Marine] Brigade." LtCol Russell Lloyd, Jr., Comments on draft ms, n.d. [ca. Jul86] (Vietnam Comment File).

recalled Colonel Ludwig, "General Abrams was outstanding at getting good cooperative work from everybody." In addition, the demanding roles of officers in principal staff positions lessened the tendency toward parochialism among Marine officers and the officers of the other Services. Colonel Ludwig said that staff officers "worked such long hours" that there was "little time for socializing." The fact that "Marines were parceled all over town" in and around Saigon also "controlled relationships." While many senior staff officers lived in a trailer camp near MACV Headquarters, Ludwig lived in a "villa area out in Saigon" so that the public information officer could hold once a month "off the record meetings in the villa" with the press.[66]

The work of Marine officers in MACV was, in some cases, distinctly different from previous staff experiences. Colonel Dindinger directed the Combined Intelligence Center (CICV) along with his Vietnamese counterpart, Lieutenant Colonel Le Nuygen Binh, from June 1970 to June 1971. Working under the Director of Intelligence Production, J-2, MACV, Colonel Charles E. Wilson, U.S. Army, Dindinger and Binh coordinated the efforts of a staff of 500, "of which 300 were U.S. and 200 ARVN at the start of the period, while as a function of Vietnamization this ratio was reversed by the end of the period." Dindinger described the function of CICV as the "provision of finished intelligence to ComUSMACV, the MACV staff and subordinate U.S., ROK, Australian and New Zealand field forces." Eight subordinate branches were tasked functionally to process information: Administration, Supply, Order of Battle, Area Analysis, Pattern Analysis, Imagery Interpretation, Captured Material Exploitation, and Intelligence Data Bank (IBM 360). Dindinger later explained the organization:

> Each of these branches contained a U.S. and an ARVN component that physically worked side by side, and each had a U.S. and RVN branch head. This arrangement which was in effect when I arrived, was continued during my tour, and tended to be synergistic as to results.

CICV products generally fell into two forms, "responses to specific requests or regular periodic reports." Pattern Analyses requested from commands in all four Corps areas were among the common specific requests, while enemy base area studies were representative of the regular periodic reports. Among the one-time CICV efforts during 1970-1971 were the temporary assignment of a lieutenant colonel of CICV to the military component of the U.S. delegation to the Paris Peace Talks "to provide intelligence input" and the exploitation of previously unexamined Chinese Communist "antiaircraft material from Cambodia after friendly access to that country had been gained."[67]

Courtesy of Col John G. Miller, USMC

U.S. Marine Maj Gene A. Adams, Jr., during ebb tide, looks unhappily across desolate mud flats and the Cua Lon River at the Navy Solid Anchor facility.

Colonel Richard H. Rainforth filled the unique billets of liaison officer to MACV and, separately, to Seventh Air Force through August 1970. As liaison for MACV, Rainforth and his successors—Colonel Lewis C. Street III until 4 October 1970, then Colonel Stephen G. Warren until III MAF redeployed in April 1971—provided personnel support for transient Marines passing through Saigon and protocol for all visitors with Marine Corps interest. Technical representatives from defense contractors and civilian attorneys representing Marines in Vietnam were among those in the latter category. Rainforth also provided Marine Corps representation on various boards, councils, and committees, whose interests ranged from matters dealing with the Vietnam regional exchange to auditing commercial entertainment to determine "suitability, classification, and how much they should be paid." As liaison to Seventh Air Force, Rainforth and his successors were III MAF and 1st MAW's point men on all aviation matters. They were, for example, the intermediaries on flight safety investigations of joint concern and on the crucial subject of "single management," they were readily available to present the Marine Corps view when issues arose.

Rainforth said that his job was simplified tremendously by the other Marine officers, especially the lieutenant colonels, on the MACV staff. "These people were terrific," said Rainforth. "They would call me every time there was a ripple, trying to keep it from becoming a wave . . . and I'd journey up to Da Nang . . . to carry messages back and forth and see what the feeling was up there." Colonel Rainforth also lauded the Marines in Saigon for the quality of their joint service, saying, "they're never going to knock [the Marine Corp's] joint representation."[68]

Senior Marine officers on the MACV staff echoed Rainforth's view of the performance of Marines and of the officers of other services with MACV. "The staff worked well," recalled Ludwig. "I shared the general impression that General Abrams was an amazing and phenomenal individual, and relationships were all very professional."[69] Colonel Dindinger later voiced the same opinion:

> My strongest remaining impression is that of the high degree of cooperation and harmony which was maintained. CICV had U.S. Marines, soldiers, sailors and airmen, as well as Vietnamese soldiers and civilians, working together on difficult problems with short deadlines, and the level of acrimony and friction was consistently minimal.[70]

Embassy Marines

Company E, Marine Security Guard (MSG) Battalion, fielded an average of five officers and 145 enlisted Marines during the first half of 1970 to protect the American Embassy in Saigon. In contrast, Company C, which was headquartered in Manila, Republic of the Philippines, deployed about 120 Marines in 14 locations throughout Southeast Asia, including a detachment of five Marines in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Activated on 1 February 1969, Company E was commanded from January to November 1970 by Captain Herbert M. Steigelman, Jr.[71]

Primary responsibilities of Company E were to safeguard classified material and protect American personnel and property at the Embassy. To accomplish this mission the company was organized into three elements: a headquarters section of two officers and 10 enlisted Marines; an interior guard force of two officers and 90 enlisted Marines; and an exterior guard force of one officer and 46 enlisted Marines.

Exterior security would normally be the responsibility of the host country. Company E was the first Marine Security Guard unit tasked to provide external security—essentially a tactical mission in Saigon—to an American Embassy. Partially as a result of the attack on the American Embassy during Tet 1968, a reinforced rifle platoon was formed to control access into the compound and provide a reaction force in the event of another attack. Unlike the exterior guard force, the two platoons assigned to interior guard duty were trained Marine security guards. In addition, a detachment of seven Marines was selected as the Ambassador's Personal Security Unit (PSU). The PSU provided compound security and conducted route reconnaissance when the Ambassador left the compound. All posts, vehicles, and buildings in the compound were connected by a sophisticated communications system, known as the "Dragon Net," which was manned by a five-man detachment.[72]

Dignitaries and senior ranking officers were provided security by Company E Marines during official visits to the American Embassy. From 1-2 January 1970, Vice President Spiro T. Agnew met with Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker and other officials during a brief stay in Vietnam. General Leonard F. Chapman, Jr., the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Joseph W. Daily, toured Company E's area on 9 January. In July, Secretary of State William Rogers stayed with the Ambassador for three days, and in August, Vice President Agnew returned again for another two days of meetings with Ambassador Bunker.[73]

During 1971 the average monthly strength of Company E was five officers and 150 enlisted Marines, representing an increase of about 10 men from 1970. The personnel change was brought about by added security responsibilities. In May 1971 five Marines were sent to Da Nang on temporary additional duty to establish external security functions for the American consulate there. An additional five Marines reinforced the security element in June when the Marine Security Guard Detachment at the American consulate was formally activated. The Da Nang detachment was comprised of one NCO and nine watchstanders who were under the operational control of the consulate general and the administrative control of Company E.[74]

Embassy Marines were involved in civic action programs, as virtually all other Marine units in Vietnam. Company E held a party on 24 December 1970 for the Vietnamese children of the Go Van Number II Orphanage. The children were fed at the Marshall Hall enlisted quarters and later at Marine House Number Two were presented with gifts by Santa Claus. The gifts were donated by personnel of USAID, the Embassy,

and JUSPAO. Four months later, Company E assumed sponsorship of My Hoa Orphanage. On Easter Sunday 1971, Embassy Marines visited the children of the orphanage, bringing gifts of food, clothing, and toys which had been shipped by the American Legion auxiliaries of Punta Gorda and Naples, Florida, and by the citizens and merchants of Immokalee, Florida through the efforts of the mother of Company E's Gunnery Sergeant Robert M. Jenkins.[75]

Although Marines were screened closely for security guard duty, Company E, like all other sizeable Marine commands in Vietnam, had its share of discipline and drug problems. From January to June 1971, Captain William E. Keller, Jr., who took command in November 1970, conducted company-level nonjudicial punishment on 27 Marines, while two more Marines were dealt with at battalion level. Five of the Marines disciplined were ultimately removed from duty when found unsuitable for retention in the Marine Security Guard program. An additional five Marines during the same period were recommended for discharge by reason of unfitness for possession of dangerous drugs.*

On 29 April 1971 at the American Embassy Compound, the Chief of Missions, Saigon, Vietnam, the Honorable Ellsworth Bunker, presented the Meritorious Unit Commendation to Company E "for meritorious service as the immediate defense and security force for the U.S. Mission, Saigon, Republic of Vietnam, from 1 February 1969 to 31 December 1970." Two months after the Ambassador presented the award, Company E joined Sub-Unit One, 1st ANGLICO, and the Marine Advisory Unit as the only U.S. Marine commands remaining in Vietnam. The MSG detachment in Saigon, which would be transferred on 30 June 1974 to Company C, headquartered in Hong Kong, would ultimately be the last American unit evacuated from South Vietnam on 30 April 1975, nearly four years after the Marine Corps tactical role ended in that country.[76]

Conclusion

With President Nixon's commitment to the American public to reduce troop levels in Vietnam, the Marine presence decreased in strength from some 55,000 to a mere few hundred between January 1970 and June 1971.

Throughout the redeployment cycle, two significant and fundamental features of the large-scale Marine presence in Vietnam remained constant: the essential air-ground character of Marine units and the focus on small-unit counterguerrilla tactics. A Marine air-ground team existed until the final redeployment of the 3d Marine Amphibious Brigade in June 1971. Building on the tactical successes of 1968-1969, which had left the enemy battered and exhausted, III MAF, now concentrated in the Da Nang TAOR, stepped up its grassroots counterguerrilla campaign. The Marines expanded the Combined Action Platoon concept—incorporating Marine infantry companies—with the Combined Unit Pacification Program. To enhance mobility and to facilitate controlling areas of operation with fewer forces during the latter stages of redeployment, Marine infantry regiments requested and received helicopter detachments which were prepositioned with ground forces to expedite response time to enemy contacts or sightings.

The enemy was on the defensive during the last 18 months of Marine operations. Although the pacification goals established for 1970 by MACV were not entirely met, the steady decline in VC/NVA offensive activity from 1970-1971 and the return to terrorism and subversion, combined with the enemy's reliance on indirect fire and limited objective ground attacks, gave indication the enemy was either hurting or biding his time as redeployment proceeded.

Vietnamization was given increased emphasis during this period. General Abrams' "One War" strategy of 1968-1969, which emphasized that the small-unit counterguerrilla war and the big-unit war were mutually supporting and interdependent, was continued in 1970-1971 with the RVNAF assuming proportionately greater responsibilities as American forces redeployed. To better pursue the goals of Vietnamization, the size of the RVNAF increased progressively. By June 1971 the ARVN, VNN, VNMC, RFs and PFs of the RVNAF numbered 1,058,237.

General Lam, who commanded Vietnamese forces operating in the five provinces of I Corps, maneuvered 36 ARVN infantry battalions, 5 ARVN cavalry battalions, and 5 VNMC infantry battalions during the final months of Marine redeployment in 1971. In addition to the U.S. Army forces remaining in I Corps following the departure of the Marines, the Vietnamese regulars were augmented by the RFs and PFs,

*In June 1971, the commander of Naval Forces Vietnam established a program requiring that all personnel, regardless of rank, departing Vietnam on permanent change of station orders undergo urinalysis examination for detection of opium or derivatives. Those identified as users were treated at the Detoxification Center, Nha Be and were then evacuated to U.S. Naval Hospital, San Diego.

which Marine CAP and CUPP units had tried to develop into independent and self-sufficient units. While General Lam's forces were much improved, they were still relatively limited in number to control effectively a military region that was 220 miles long and from 30-75 miles wide. In spite of that, the ARVN seemed to be holding their own as Marine redeployment moved forward, and the RFs and PFs began to conduct more offensive operations. There were still ominous indicators that, while the enemy appeared to be in decline, the GVN had demonstrated only limited capability of winning the war with far less American assistance.

As measures of RVNAF progress, the allied offensives into enemy sanctuaries within the boundaries of border nations during 1970-1971 achieved some success but also demonstrated Vietnamese weakness and left lingering doubts whether the escalating pace of redeployment was compatible with the progress of Vietnamization. The invasion of base areas in Cambodia in 1970 cost the enemy dearly in men, arms, ammunition, and supplies and rendered him temporarily incapable of mounting an offensive. The South Vietnamese move into Laos in February and March 1971 was less successful, even though MACV estimated that the NVA lost some 13,000 killed to the RVNAF's reported 1,500.

Evaluating the VNMC performance in Laos during Operation Lam Son 719, American Marine advisors observed that the companies and battalions fought well, but the brigades and the division exhibited many of the deficiencies apparent in other Vietnamese forces. Relative to the progress of Vietnamization, therefore, Lam Son 719 showed clearly that body counts and other statistical measurements of battlefield performance could not necessarily be translated into conclusions concerning operational success or failure. In the broader analysis Lam Son 719 unveiled the grave weakness that Marines had observed in the RVNAF in large-scale operations: the inadequacies in high level staff work; the questionable ability to maneuver effectively units of greater than battalion size; the reluctance of commanders to delegate authority to staffs; the absence of long-range logistical planning; the disregard for the rudiments of supply discipline; and the inability to exercise communications security. Lam Son 719 also revealed the technological dependence—tactically and logistically—that the United States had bred into the RVNAF.

For the U.S. Marines this 18-month period was one of dramatic change, aside from the total draw-down of the remaining 55,000 Marines in III MAF. Lieutenant General John R. Chaisson, who was Chief of Staff, Headquarters Marine Corps in May 1971, remarked of this stage of the war, "We had adopted, from 1969 on, the idea that we were in the postwar period."[77] Following the redeployment of 1969, the focus in 1970-1971 for the Marine Corps, therefore, was finely balanced between maintaining tactical control of Marine areas of operation while encouraging Vietnamization, and conducting a systematic and orderly redeployment, a gargantuan task, especially for logisticians.

Acting on General Chapman's guidance to take every item worth five dollars or more with them, III MAF logistical planners meticulously inspected and inventoried material, dismantled installations, redistributed equipment, and transferred facilities and real estate from January 1970 to June 1971. The III MAF Redistribution Center, created in May 1970 to reduce excesses of equipment before the redeployment, coordinated the transfer of Marine Corps gear valued at $50,409,000 and numbering over 325,000 separate items. Most of these went from Vietnam to Marine commands, ranging from the Western Pacific to the west coast of the United States. The 3d MAB ended ground combat operations, other than local security around installations, on 7 May 1971. Within three weeks Marine combat air operations ceased and by 4 June all Marine real estate had been turned over to either the ARVN or the U.S. Army. The last units of the 3d MAB left Vietnam by sea and air on 25 and 26 June. Only Sub-Unit One, 1st Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company; the Marine Advisory Unit; the Embassy Marines; a handful of technicians; and Marines on the MACV staff remained. For the Marine Corps, the war reverted to an advisory effort.

Notes

PART I
A Contracting War

CHAPTER 1

THE WAR IN I CORPS, EARLY 1970

Unless otherwise noted, material in this chapter is drawn from: MilHistBr, Office of the Secretariat, General Staff, HQ, USMACV, Command History 1969 and Command History 1970, hereafter cited as MACV ComdHist with appropriate year; Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam, January through December 1970, hereafter cited as FMFPac, MarOpsV with month and year; III MAF ComdCs, Jan-Jun 70; and BGen Edwin H. Simmons, USMC, "Marine Corps Operations in Vietnam, 1969-1972," in *The Marines in Vietnam 1954-1973: An Anthology and Annotated Bibliography* (Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, HQMC, 1974), hereafter cited as Simmons, "Marine Operations."

III MAF in January 1970

1. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan70, p. 32; FMFPac ComdC, Jan-Jun 70; III MAF 4th Quarterly Written Summary, Combined Campaign Plan 1969, dtd 17Jan70, Encl 8, 1st MarDiv Admin Files; hereafter 4th Quarterly Plan, 1969; Combined Action Force ComdC, Jan70.
2. Maj Miles D. Waldron, USA, and Sp5 Richard W. Beavers, "The Critical Year 1968: The XXIV Corps Team" (U. S. Army Center of Military History), hereafter cited as XXIV Corps History 68, pp. 2-3, 14-15, 77-78; MACV ComdHist 1969, I, ch. V, p. 44; 4th Quarterly Plan 1969.
3. Simmons, "Marine Operations;" 4th Quarterly Plan 1969.
4. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Feb70, p. 19; 4th Quarterly Plan 1969.
5. MACV ComdHist 1969, I, ch. IV, pp. 1-5; FMFPac ComdC, Jan-Jun70.
6. Biographical Files (RefSec, MCHC); LtGen Herman Nickerson, Jr., intvw, Jan73, (Oral HistColl, MCHC) hereafter Nickerson intvw.
7. MACV ComdHist 1970, III, p. E-3.
8. MACV ComdHist 1969, I, ch. III, p. 88; MACV ComdHist 1970, I, ch. V, pp. 89-90; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan70, p. 42.
9. MajGen Ormond R. Simpson, Debriefing at FMFPac, 15Dec69, Tape 4695, (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Simpson Debrief; refer also to LtGen H. Nickerson, Jr., debriefing at FMFPac, 10Mar70, Tape 4806 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).
10. Simpson Debrief.

Allied and Enemy Strategy, 1969-1970

11. A convenient statement of the Marine concept of the relationship between pacification and large-unit operations can be found in FMFPac, MarOpsV, pp. 4-5.
12. MajGen Lloyd B. Ramsey, USA, Comments on draft ms, 2Jun83 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter Ramsey Comments.
13. Gen William C. Westmoreland, USA, intvw, 4Apr83, p. 8 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).
14. MACV Comd Hist 1969, I, ch. II, pp. 3-7, 14-17; Kevin P. Buckley, "General Abrams Deserves a Better War," *The New York Times Magazine*, 5Oct69, pp. 34-5, 120-31, offers a summary of Abrams' strategy and a sketch of his personality.
15. MACV ComdHist 1969, I, ch. I, pp. 1-4.
16. Ibid, I, ch. III, pp. 47-48, 94-97; the command history quotes long passages from Resolutions 9 and 14.
17. All of these plans are summarized in Ibid. I, ch. II, pp. 1-8, and II, ch. VII, 1-2.

The III MAF/ICTZ Combined Plan for 1970

All material in this section is drawn from the III MAF/ICTZ Combined Campaign Plan 1970, dtd 13Dec69 , hereafter III MAF/ICTZ Combined Campaign Plan 1970. Footnote citations in this section refer to the plan and list only locations of the material within the plan.

18. Anx B, pp. 1-1, 1-2.
19. Anx L, pp. L-1-L-3.

Troop Redeployment—Keystone Bluejay

20. III MAF/ICTZ Combined Campaign Plan 1970, pp. 2-3.
21. MACV ComdHist 1970, II, ch. VII, p. 2; HQMC Messages.
22. MACV ComdHist 1969, I, ch. IV, pp. 11-13, 20-24; Simmons, "Marine Operations," pp. 128, 132.
23. Simmons, "Marine Operations," p. 132; FMFPac ComdC, Jan-Jun70, p.2.
24. Ibid., p. 133; MACV ComdHist 1969, I, ch. V, p. 177.
25. LtGen Leo J. Dulacki, comments on draft ms, 8Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter Dulacki Comments.
26. LtGen Leo J. Dulacki, USMC (Ret), intvw 24Oct74, pp. 91-2, 97-8 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Dulacki intvw.
27. Col Floyd Waldrop, comments on draft ms, 16Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter Waldrop Comments.
28. Dulacki Comments.
29. HQMC Messages; *New York Times*, 7Nov69, and 5 Dec69.
30. Dulacki intvw, pp. 96-98, HQMC Messages; Dulacki Comments.
31. MACV ComdHist 1970, I, ch. IV, p. 10.
32. HQMC Messages; LtGen William J. Van Ryzin, intvw, 20Apr71, p. 65 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).
33. Dulacki Comments.
34. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, pp. 64-65. The 26th Marines was attached to the 1st Marine Division, but the tank, engineer, amphibian tractor, reconnaissance, and other elements which would be attached to it to form an RLT had been designated in advance so that they quickly could be detached from their parent formations to establish the RLT. Col Ralph A. Heywood, debriefing at

FMFPac, dtd 15Dec69, Tape 4732 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Heywood Debrief.
35. LtGen William K. Jones, comments on draft ms, n.d. (Vietnam Comment File).
36. III MAF OPlan 183-69, dtd 1Sept69; USMC Fact Sheet on Personnel Policy in Keystone Bluejay, dtd Jan70.
37. MACV ComdHist 1970, I, ch. IV, pp. 23-24; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan70, pp. 29-30, 34-35, Feb70, pp. 27-30, Mar70, p. 30.
38. FMFPac, MarOpsV, pp. 27-28, 30; 1st MAW ComdC, Jan70, Feb70.
39. FMFPac ComdC, Jan-Jun70, pp. 43-44; FMFPac, MarOpsV, p. 29; CAF ComdC, Mar70.

The Change of Command in I Corps

Additional sources for this section are from III MAF AAR, Opn Cavalier Beach, dtd 18Apr70, hereafter Cavalier Beach AAR.

40. ComUSMACV Directive 10-11, dtd 1Nov68, III MAF Admin Files.
41. III MAF ComdC, Jan70, p. 7.
42. XXIV Corps Hist 68, pp. 5-11, 14-17, 20-24, 86-87.
43. ComUSMACV memo to CGIIIMAF and other commanders, Subj: Reduction in Force, dtd 3Aug69, III MAF Admin Files.
44. CGIIIMAF msg to ComUSMACV, dtd 14Aug69; ComUSMACV msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 25Aug69 in III MAF Admin Files.
45. CG III MAF msg to ComUSMACV, dtd 30Oct69; III MAF Admin Files.
46. Cavalier Beach AAR; Draft Terms of Reference for III MAF, dtd 7Feb70, III MAF Admin Files.
47. MACV, Draft of Proposed Changes to Directive 10-11, dtd 16Feb70, III MAF Admin Files.
48. Col George C. Fox, debriefing at FMFPac, 6May70. Tape 4807, (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Fox Debrief.
49. Dulacki intvw, pp. 105-107.
50. Dulacki Comments.
51. Cavalier Beach AAR.
52. CAF ComdC, Mar and Sept 70.
53. Asst C/S, G-3, III MAF memo to CGIIIMAF, dtd 16Feb70; Cavalier Beach ARR.
54. BGen Leo J. Dulacki, debriefing at FMFPac, Jun70, Tape 4853 (Oral HistColl, MCHC) hereafter, Dulacki Debrief and Dulacki Comments.
55. Ibid and Dulacki intvw, pp. 113-114.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. XXIV Corps OpO 2-C-70 (Cavalier Beach), dtd 1Feb70.
59. Col Herbert L. Wilkerson, debriefing at FMFPac, 13July70, Tape 4892, (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereaftet Wilkerson Debrief.
60. III MAF ComdC, Mar70, p. 8.
61. Biographical Files (RefSec, MCHC); LtCol William R. Fails, USMC, *Marines and Helicopters, 1962-1973* (Washington: Hist&MusDiv, 1978), pp. 109-13, hereaftet Fails, *Marines and Helicopters*.
62. K. B. McCutcheon to The Group Division, Aetna Life Insurance Co, dtd 26Feb1937, LtGen Keith B. McCutcheon Papers (PC 464, Collections Sec, MCHC), hereaftet McCutcheon Papers.
63. III MAF ComdC, Apr70, p. 16.
64. Dulacki Debrief; Cavalier Beach AAR.
65. Dulacki Comments.
66. Ibid.
67. Wilkerson Debrief; Dulacki Debrief.
68. Dulacki Debrief.
69. Ibid.
70. Dulacki Comments.

CHAPTER 2

THE WAR CONTINUES

Unless otherwise noted, material in this chapter is derived from: III MAF ComdCs, Jan-Jun70; 1stMarDiv ComdCs, JanJun70; MACV ComdHist, 1970; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Jun70; Simmons, "Marine Operations."

Overview and the Defense of Da Nang

Additional material to the above for this section includes: 1st Mar ComdCs, Jan-Jun70; 5th Mar ComdCs, Jan-Jun70; 7th Mar ComdCs, Jan-Jun70; 26th Mar ComdCs, Jan-Mar70; 11th Mar ComdCs, Jan-Jun70.

1. MACV ComdHist 1970, I, ch. V, p. 7.
2. Ibid., III, pp. E10-E12; Fox Debrief.
3. MACV ComdHist 1970, III, E10, E12.
4. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan70, pp. 17-18, Feb70, pp. 16-19.
5. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Feb70, pp. 19-20.
6. XXIV Corps 1st Quarterly Written Summary, Combined Campaign Plan 1970, dtd 16Apr70, Encl 2, 1stMarDiv Admin Files.
7. General Officer Biographical File, (RefSec, MCHC), hereafter, General Officer Bio File.
8. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Apr70; Simmons, "Marine Operations," p. 136.
9. General Officer Bio File.
10. 1stMarDiv OpO 301A-YR, dtd 16Dec70, Anx C.
11. Ibid.
12. Simmons, "Marine Operations," p. 141; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jul70, p. 22.
13. Simmons, "Marine Operations," p. 136.
14. 1st Mar Div G-2 Overview, 30Jun70 and 1st Mar Div G-2 Overview, 31Dec70, both in 1stMarDiv Documents; III MAF ComdCs, Jan-Jun70.
15. 1stMarDiv G-2 Overview, 30Jun70, 1stMarDiv Documents; FMFPac, MarOpsV, May70, pp. 12-16.
16. MACV ComdHist, 1970, I, ch. IV, pp. 32-33.
17. RVN JGS Memo dtd 7Feb69, in 1stMarDiv Documents; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jul70, p. 22; LtCol William Blakely, Jr., USA, Deputy Province Senior Advisor, memo to CGIIIMAF, dtd 24Apr70 (McCutcheon Papers); Col Noble L. Beck, debriefing at FMFPac, 16Jul70, Tape 4893 (OralHistColl, MCHC); Col Floyd H. Waldrop, Debriefing at FMFPac, 19Aug70, Tape 4926 (OralHistColl, MCHC), hereafter Waldrop Debrief.
18. ICTZ Combined Campaign Plan 1970, dtd 13Dec69, pp. 23-24; Waldrop Debrief.
19. 1stMarDiv G-3 Ops Summary, dtd 29Jun70, 1stMarDiv Documents; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jan70, p. 3.
20. 1stMarDiv FragO 7-70, dtd 11Feb70, in 1stMarDiv ComdC, Feb70; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Mar70, pp. 21-22.

21. 1stMarDiv OPlan 2-70, dtd 22Apr70, in 1stMarDiv ComdC, Apr70, tab B-28.
22. III MAF ComdCs, Jan-Jun70.
23. CG1stMarDiv msg to 1stMarDiv adcon/opcon, dtd 1Jan70 in 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 1-5 Jan70.

The Inner Defenses: Northern Sector Defense Command and Southern Sector Defense Command

24. Col William C. Patton, comments on draft ms, 15Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File) and 11th Mar ComdC, Mar-Apr70.
25. 11th Mar ComdCs, Jan-Jun70.
26. 1st Tank Bn ComdCs, Jan-Feb70; for the attack on Op Piranha, see 1st Tank Bn Jnl 4Jan70.
27. 1st Tank Bn ComdC, Mar70; 1/5 ComdCs, Mar-Jun70.

The 1st and 26th Marines: The Rocket Belt

Additional material in this section is drawn from: 1st Mar ComdCs, Jan-Jun70 and 26th Mar ComdCs, Jan-Mar70.

28. CO 1st Mar memo to CG1stMarDiv, dtd 4Feb69; CG1stMarDiv memo to CGIIIMAF, dtd 25Mar69.
29. CO 26th Mar rpt to CG1stMarDiv, dtd 22Jan70; Col Ralph A. Heywood Debrief.
30. LtCol Pieter L. Hogaboom, comments on draft ms, 10Jun83 (Vietnam Comment File).
31. 26th Mar ComdC, Jan70; 1/26, 2/26, 3/26 ComdCs, Jan-Feb70; Heywood Debrief.
32. 1/26 ComdC, Jan70, p. III-2.
33. 1/1, 2/1, 3/1 ComdCs, Jan-Feb70; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan70, p. 3.
34. Wilkerson Debrief.
35. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan70, p. 3; 2/26 ComdC, Jan70, pt. III; 3/26 ComdC, Feb70, pt II; LtCol Godfrey S. Delcuze, intvw by 1stMarDiv Historical Team, 13Feb70, Tape 4768, and 1stLt William R. Purdy, intvw by 1stMarDiv Historical Team, 11Feb70, Tape 4768 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Delcuze intvw or Purdy intvw.
36. Wilkerson Debrief.
37. Purdy intvw; HMM-263 ComdC, Jan70; pp 2, 10. During January LtCol Warren G. Cretney's HML-367 (Cobras) also flew in support of Kingfisher patrols; see HML-367 ComdC, Jan70, p. 4.
38. Purdy intvw.
39. Cpl James D. Dalton, intvw by 1stMarDiv Historical Team, 11Feb70, Tape 4768 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Dalton intvw.
40. 2dLt John C. Swenson, intvw by 1stMarDiv Historical Team, Tape 4768 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).
41. Dalton intvw.
42. Ibid.
43. Purdy intvw; 1/1 ComdC, Jan70, Spt Rpt No. 37.
44. Delcuze intvw; Purdy intvw.
45. Col William V. H. White, comments on draft ms, 6Jul83 (Vietnam Comment File).
46. 1st Mar ComdC, Mar70; 26th Mar ComdC, Feb-Mar70; 1/26 and 2/26 ComdCs, Feb-Mar70.
47. 3/26 ComdC, Feb-Mar70; 3/1 ComdC, Mar70.
48. 26th Mar ComdC, Mar70.
49. 1/1, 2/1, 3/1 ComdCs, Mar-Jun70.
50. 2/1 ComdC, Jun70, pp. 1-2, II-2.
51. 2/1 ComdC, Feb70, p. 19.
52. 1/1 ComdC, Apr70, p. 21.
53. Spt Rpt No. 256, 1/1 ComdC, Mar70.
54. 2/1 ComdC, Apr70, pp. 29-30; Medal of Honor Citation, LCpl Emilio A. De la Garza, Jr., USMC, and biography, Jul71 (RefSec, MCHC).
55. 3/5 FragO 10-70, Anx A, in 3/5 ComdC, Feb70.
56. 1st Mar ComdC, Apr70, pp. II-C-1, II-C-1, II-C-2; 1/1 OpO 4-70, dtd 9Apr70, and Supp Intell Rpt, OpO Hung Quang 1/32, 15-27Apr70, both in 1/1 ComdC, Apr70; see pp. 17-24, same source, for events of the operation.
57. 3/1 ComdC, Apr70, p. 11.
58. 2/1 ComdC, Apr70, p. 9.
59. 3/1 ComdC, Apr70, pp. 12-13; 2/1 ComdC, Jan-Jun70.
60. Heywood Debrief.
61. FMFPac, MarOpsV, May70, pp. 6-8. For an example of the system in action, see 3/1 AAR on Rocket Attack, dtd 27May70, tab 23, in 1stMarDiv ComdC, May70. Casualty figures in 1stMarDiv G-3 Ops Sum, dtd 29Jun70, 1stMarDiv Documents.

The 5th Marines: Thuong Duc, An Hoa, and Arizona Territory

Additional materials in this section are drawn from 5th Mar ComdCs, Jan-Jun70 and 1/5, 2/5, and 3/5 ComdCs, Jan-Jun70.

62. 1stMarDiv G-3 Ops Sum, dtd 29Jun70, 1stMarDiv Documents; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan70, pp. 4-5, Feb70, p. 4.
63. 1stLt Harold B. Lamb, intvw by 1stMarDiv Historical Team, 7May70, Tape 4857 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Lamb intvw.
64. 3/5 ComdC, Jan70, p. 5.
65. 5th Mar ComdC, Mar70, p. 3; 1/5, 2/5, 3/5 ComdCs, Mar70.
66. 1/5 ComdC, Mar70, pp. 2-2, 3-2.
67. 1/5 ComdC, Mar70, Lamb intvw.
68. Summary of Pacifier Ops, 15 March-21 Jun70, 1stMarDiv Documents; 1/5 ComdC, May70, p. 2-3; 2/5 ComdC, May70, p. 7.
69. 1/5 ComdC, Jun70, pp. 2-1 through 2-3.
70. Summary of Pacifier Ops, 15 March - June 70, 1stMarDiv Documents.
71. 2/5 ComdC, Apr70, pp. 4-5.
72. 2/5 ComdC, May70, pp. 4-7.
73. Ibid , pp. 4-8.
74. 2/5 ComdC, Jun70, pp. 6-7.
75. 3/5 ComdC, Mar-Jun70.
76. 3/5 ComdC, Apr70, pt. III.
77. 3/5 ComdC, June70, pt. II.
78. 1/5 ComdC, Feb70, pp. 3-4.
79. 1/5 ComdC, Jan70; 3/5 ComdC, Apr-May70.
80. 2/5 and 3/5 ComdCs, Apr70.

The 7th Marines: The Que Son Mountains

Additional material for this section is taken from 7th Mar ComdCs, Jan-Jun70 and 1/7, 2/7, and 3/7 ComdCs, Jan-Jun70.

81. Ramsey Comments.
82. Simmons, "Marine Operations," p. 131; 1stMarDiv G-3 Op Sum, dtd 29Jun70, 1stMarDiv Documents.

83. 1/7, 2/7, 3/7 ComdCs, Jan-Jun70.
84. 2/7 Jnl, 14-15Jan70 in 2/7 ComdC, Jan70.
85. 1/7 Jnl, 26Jun70 in 1/7 ComdC, Jun70.
86. Unless otherwise noted, all details of the attack on FSB Ross are taken from the following: 7th Mar SitRep, dtd 6Jan70, 7th Mar ComdC; 1/7 ComdC, Jan70; CGIIIMAF msg to CGFMFPac, dtd 6Jan70 in MACV Telecons, Jan70; 3/11 ComdC, Jan70, p. 22; the following interviews by 1stMarDiv Historical Team, all on Tape 4734 (Oral HistColl, MCHC): Capt Edward T. Clark, 12Jan70, hereafter Clark intvw; 1stLt Louis R. Ambort, 6Jan70, hereafter Ambort intvw; 1stLt William G. Peters, 12Jan70, hereafter Peters intvw; 2dLt R. Peter Kemmener, 6Jan70; SSgt John C. Little, 12Jan70; Sgt James P. Hackett, 7Jan70, hereafter Hackett intvw; LCpl William T. Smith, 13Jan70.
87. Peters intvw.
88. Ambort intvw.
89. Clark intvw.
90. Ibid; Peters intvw.
91. Hackett intvw.
92. Details of the 12 February action are drawn from: 1/7 Jnl, 12-13Feb70, in 1/7 ComdC, Feb70; and the following interviews by 1stMarDiv Historical Team, all on Tape 4769 (Oral HistColl, MCHC): 1stLt Louis R. Ambort, 17Feb70, hereafter Ambort intvw, Feb 70; 2dLt Robert B. Kearney, III, 17Feb70; PFC Gary E. Freel, 17Feb70.
93. Ambort intvw, Feb70.
94. 1/7 FragO 1-70, dtd 8Mar70 and 1/7 Jnl 9, 16Mar70, in 1/7 ComdC, Mar70.
95. 7th Mar SitRep, 24Apr70 in 7th Mar ComdC, Apr70; 2/7 Jnl 24Apr70 in 2/7 ComdC, Apr70.
96. 2/7 ComdC, Apr-May70.
97. 2/7 ComdCs, Mar-Jun70. This policy also was intended to improve discipline in a battalion plagued with racial tension; see Col Vincent A. Alberts, Jr., "Case Study: Analysis of Racial Tension" (Paper prepared for class at Naval War College, 3 Feb 74), p. 4.
98. 2/7 Jnl, 6May70 in 2/7 ComdC, May70.
99. 2/7 ComdC, Mar70, pp. 1-3; 2/7 Jnl, 9-10Jun70, in 2/7 ComdC, Jun70.
100. 3/7 OpO 3-70, dtd 23May70, in 3/7 ComdC, May70; 3/11 ComdC, May70, p. 7.
101. Details of the conditions encountered in this operation are taken from the following interviews with 1stMarDiv Historical Team, all on Tape 4864, (Oral HistColl, MCHC): 1stLt Deryll B. Banning, 20Jun70; 2dLt William N. Lindsay, III, 20Jun70; 2dLt Wallace L. Wilson, Jr., 20Jun70, hereafter Wilson intvw; Col Karl Mueller, comments on draft ms, 19Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File).
102. Wilson intvw.
103. Ibid.
104. Lindsay intvw.
105. 7th Mar ComdC, Jun70, pp. 7-8; 3/7 ComdC, Jun70, p. 13; Wilson intvw.
106. 3/7 ComdC, Jun70, pt. II; Wilson intvw.
107. Lindsey intvw.
108. Ibid.
109. 3/7 FragO 3-70, dtd 20Jun70, in 3/7 ComdC, Jun70; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jun70, p. 5.
110. 7th Mar ComdCs, Jan-Jun70; 3/11 ComdCs, Jan-Jun70.
111. 3/11 ComdC, May70, p. II-3.
112. 2/7 ComdC, Jun70, pp. 5-6.
113. 3/7 ComdCs, May-Jun70.
114. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jun70, p. 6; 7th Mar ComdCs, Jan-Jun70; 1/7, 2/7, 3/7 ComdCs, Jan-Jun70.

Results

115. These figures are compiled from the monthly summaries in 1stMarDiv ComdCs, Jan-Jun70.
116. 1stMarDiv G-3 OpSum, dtd 29Jun70, in 1stMarDiv Documents.

CHAPTER 3

THE CAMBODIA INVASION AND CONTINUED REDEPLOYMENT PLANNING, APRIL-JULY 1970

Unless otherwise noted, material in this chapter is drawn from MACV ComdHist 70, I, III, and Supplement; and FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-July 70.

The War Spreads into Cambodia

1. MACV ComdHist 70, III, Anx C, pp. 35-47, 104-108.
2. FMFPac, MarOpsV, May70, pp. 33-34, Jun70, p. 36.
3. Col G. C. Fox, debriefing at FMFPac, 6May70, Tape 4806 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Fox Debrief.
4. MACV ComdHist 70, Supplement, p. 9; FMFPac, MarOpsV, July70, pp. 2, 13.
5. FMFPac, MarOpsV, May70, pp. 10, 24-25; Jun70, p. 16.

Redeployment Planning Accelerates: Keystone Robin Alpha

6. MACV ComdHist 70, Supplement, p. 8.
7. HQMC Message Files.
8. MACV ComdHist 70, I, ch. 4, p. 11; Supplement, p. 9.
9. HQMC Message Files; Maj R. J. Johnson, memo for the record, Subj: Meeting with MACV J-3, dtd 29May70, and memo for the record, Subj: Telecon with LtCol Doublet, dtd 30May70, in III MAF G-3 Keystone Robin File, hereafter III MAF G-3 KSR.
10. III MAF, memo for the record, Subj: Redeployment/Reassignment of III MAF Elements, dtd 30May70, in III MAF G-3 KSR.
11. MACV ComdHist 70, I, ch. 4, p. 12; HQMC Message Files.
12. Dulacki Comments.
13. HQMC Message Files; III MAF, memo for the record, Subj: Redeployment Planning-Keystone Robin, dtd 16Jun70, in III MAF G-3 KSR.
14. ComUSMACV msg to III MAF and Other Commands, dtd 23Jun70, in III MAF G-3 KSR.
15. CinCPac msg to III MAF and Other Commands, dtd 19Jun70 and CinCPac msg to Pacific Commands, dtd 11Jul70, in III MAF G-3 KSR.
16. Col H. L. Wilkerson, memo for the record, Subj: Force Planning, dtd 9Jun70, III MAF G-3 KSR; Dulacki Debrief.
17. Col F. H. Waldrop, debriefing at FMFPac, 19Aug70, Tape 4926 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).

18. III MAF, memo for the record, Subj: Discussions with XXIV Corps Staff, dtd 14Mar70, III MAF G-3 Phase 4 Miscellaneous File; III MAF, memo for the record, Subj: Force Planning, dtd 13Jun70, III MAF G-3 KSR; Dulacki Debrief.

Plans for the 3d MAB

19. Col N. L. Beck, debriefing at FMFPac, 16Jul70, Tape 4893 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Beck Debrief.
20. LtGen William J. Van Ryzin, USMC (Ret.), intvw, 26Mar75, pp. 27-8 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Van Ryzin Transcript.
21. HQMC, MCO3120.3A, Subj: The Organization of MAFTF, dtd 18Aug70, quoted in LtCol Kenneth J. Clifford, USMCR, *Progress and Purpose: A Developmental History of the United States Marine Corps, 1900-1970* (Washington, D. C.: Hist & Museums Div, HQMC, 1973), pp. 111-112.
22. HQMC Message Files.
23. LtGen H. Nickerson msg to LtGen H. W. Buse, dtd 6Jan70, HQMC Message Files.
24. HQMC Message Files.
25. LtGen H. Nickerson msg to LtGen H. W. Buse, dtd 12Feb70 and MGen W. G. Thrash msg to LtGen K. B. McCutcheon, dtd 11Mar70, in HQMC Message Files.
26. MGen W. G. Thrash msgs to LtGen K. B. McCutcheon, dtd 11 and 17 Mar70; LtGen K. B. McCutcheon msg to LtGen H. W. Buse, dtd 19Mar70; in HQMC Message Files.
27. CG1stMAW msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 19Mar70, in III MAF G-3, III MAF Redeployment File.
28. LtCol T. P. Ganey, Action Brief, Subj: Proposed MAB Hq T/O, dtd 26Mar70, and III MAF AC/S G-3 memo to Distribution List, Subj: Draft T/O for a MAB Hq, dtd 26Mar70, in III MAF G-3 MAB Hq&Hq Co T/O File.
29. III MAF AC/S G-4 memo to C/S, Subj: Substantiation of the Requirement for a MAB Engineering Section, dtd 2Apr70, in III MAF G-3 MAB Hq & Hq Co T/O File; see the same file for other correspondence and comments on the proposed T/O.
30. For revisions of the T/O, see Ibid.; Dulacki Comments.
31. HQMC Message Files; Fox Debrief.
32. Ibid.
33. III MAF Agenda Item for WIEU Briefing MACV Hq, 18Apr70, Subj: Phase IV Redeployment, dtd 17Apr70, in III MAF G-3, MAB Redeployment File; Maj Robert T. Himmerich, comments on draft ms, 28Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter Himmerich Comments.
34. III MAF Fact Sheet, Subj: Mission and TAOI for a MAB, dtd 8Apr70, in III MAF G-3, MAB Redeployment File.
35. Maj R. J. Johnson, memo for the record, Subj: Redeployment Planning, dtd 8Jun70, III MAF G-3 KSR; Dulacki Debrief; Beck Debrief.
36. Col H. L. Wilkerson, memo for the record, Subj: Brigade Planning, dtd 29Jun70, in III MAF G-3 KSR.
37. LtGen K. B. McCutcheon msg to LtGen W. K. Jones, dtd 22Jul70, HQMC Message Files; Planning Document for Building the MAB Hq, dtd 24Jul70, in 1st MarDiv Documents.

PART II
Summer and Fall-Winter Campaigns, 1970

CHAPTER 4

THE SUMMER CAMPAIGN IN QUANG NAM, JULY-SEPTEMBER 1970

New Campaign Plans

Unless otherwise noted, all material in this chapter is drawn from MACV ComdHist, 70, I, III, and Supplement; and FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-Jul70.
1. MACV ComdHist, 70, I, ch. 2, pp. 9-11.
2. Ibid., II, ch. 7, pp. 16-20, ch. 14, pp. 1-4; Beck Debrief.
3. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jul70, p. 22; Beck Debrief; Waldrop Debrief.; Dulacki Debrief.
4. Beck Debrief.
5. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jul70, p. 2; HQMC Message Files.

Summer Offensive: The 7th Marines in Pickens Forest

Additional sources for this section are: 7th Marines ComdC, Jul-Sep70; 7th Marines CAAR, Operation Pickens Forest, dtd 18Sep70, hereafter 7th Mar PF CAAR; Col E. G. Derning, Jr., debriefing at FMFPac, 10Aug70, Tape 4958 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Derning Debrief.

6. Derning Debrief.
7. 2/7 ComdC, Jul70; Sgt T. R. Carl, intvw with 1stMarDiv Historical Team, 17Jul70, Tape 4901 (Oral HistColl, MCHC); Derning Debrief.
8. 1stMarDiv G-2, Briefing Notes, Subj: Enemy Logistics System in Quang Nam Prov, dtd 30Jun70, in 1stMarDiv Documents; Briefing Notes, Subj: Enemy BAs 112 and 127, dtd 30Jun70, 1stMarDiv Documents.
9. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jul70, pp. 3, 22-23; 5th Marines ComdC, Jul70; Beck Debrief; Waldrop Debrief.
10. Beck Debrief.
11. Derning Debrief; 7th Mar PF CAAR; Opn Pickens Forest Forecast, dtd 16Jul70, 1stMarDiv Documents.
12. 7th Mar OpO 3-70, dtd 10Jul70, Anx C, in 7th Mar PF CAAR.
13. For details of the reconnaissance activities, see patrol reports Air Hose (15-16 Jul70) and May Fly (15-16 Jul70) in 1st Recon Bn, Patrol Reports, Jul70
14. Derning Debrief.
15. 3/11 ComdC, Jul70.
16. 2/7 CAAR, Opn Pickens Forest, dtd 31Aug70, hereafter 2/7 PF CAAR, in 7th Marines PF CAAR.
17. Derning Debrief.
18. Ibid.; 7th Marines PF CAAR.
19. Derning Debrief.
20. 1/7 ComdC, Jul70; 2/7 PF CAAR; 1/5 ComdC, Jul70; 11th Mar ComdC, Jul70; 3/11 ComdC, Jul70.
21. 2/7 ComdC, Jul70; 1stLt Omer L. Gibson, intvw by 1st MAW Historical Team, 3Aug70, Tape 4942 (Oral HistColl, MCHC) gives an AO's view of the action.
22. 1/5 ComdC and Staff Jnl, Jul70.
23. Waldrop Debrief; LtGen K. B. McCutcheon msgs to LtGen W. K. Jones, dtd 27 and 31Jul70, HQMC Message Files.
24. 7th Mar FragO 32-70, in 7th Mar PF CAAR; 3/11 ComdC, Aug70.
25. Waldrop Debrief.
26. 7th Mar S-3 Jnl, 20Aug70, in 7th Mar ComdC, Aug70; 2/7 Jnl, 20Aug70 in 2/7 ComdC, Aug70.

27. 2/7 Jnl, 21Aug70, in 2/7 ComdC, Aug70.
28. 2/7 PF CAAR.
29. 3/11 ComdC, Aug70; 2/7 PF CAAR; 7th Mar PF CAAR, pp. 5-7.
30. 7th Mar PF CAAR, pp. 14-16.
31. Ibid., pp. 1, 11, 14, 20.
32. Waldrop Debrief.
33. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jul70, pp. 22-23, Aug70, pp. 7-8, 26; Waldrop Debrief.

The 1st and 5th Marines Continue the Small-Unit War

Additional materials for this section are: 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jul-Sep70; 1st Mar ComdC, Jul-Sep70; and 5th Mar ComdC, Jul-Sep70.

34. 1stMarDiv FragO 35-70, dtd 1Aug70; 1st Mar FragO 27-70, dtd 6Aug70, in 1st Mar ComdC, Aug70; 11th Mar ComdC, Jul70, p. 10, Aug70, p. 11; 1/5 ComdC, Aug70.
35. 1stMarDiv, Division Sensor Briefing, dtd 12Dec70, 1stMarDiv Documents; LtCol C. M. Mosher, debriefing at FMFPac, dtd 17Sep70, Tape 4959 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).
36. 1/1 ComdC, Jul-Sep70; 2/1 ComdC, Jul-Sep70; 3/1 ComdC, Jul-Sep70.
37. 2/1 ComdC, Sep70.
38. The account of this operation is based on: 2/1 CAAR, dtd 5Aug70, in 2/1 ComdC, Aug70; 2/1 ComdC, Jul70; 1st Mar ComdC, Aug70; Maj J. S. Grinalds, debriefing at FMFPac, 4May71, Tape 4967 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), Grinalds Debrief.
39. 2/1 CAAR, dtd 5Aug70, in 2/1 ComdC, Aug70.
40. 1st Mar ComdC, Sep70; 11th Marines ComdC, Sep70; 3/1 ComdC, Sep70.
41. 5th Mar ComdCs, Jul and Aug70.
42. Waldrop Debrief.
43. LtGen Bernard E. Trainor, Comments on draft ms, 17Oct83 (Vietnam Comment File).
44. 1/5 ComdCs, Jul-Sep70.
45. 2/5 and 3/5 ComdCs, Jul-Sep70.
46. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jul70, pp. 21-22; 5th Mar ComdC, Jul70; 2/5 ComdC, Jul70.
47. 5th Mar FragO 24-70, dtd 26Jul70, in 5th Mar ComdC, Aug70, p. 23.

Combat Declines, But the Threat Continues

48. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Aug70, pp. 1-2, Sep70, p. 9; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Sep70, p. 17.
49. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Aug70, pp. 1-2; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jul-Sep 70; III MAF ComdC, Jul-Sep70.
50. MACV ComdHist, 70, III, pp. E12-E14.
51. Ibid., III, Anx G, pp. 4-9.
52. Ibid.,III, Anx D, pp. 26-28.
53. LtGen John R. Chaisson, Position Paper on Viet Nam, n.d. (ca late70-early71), Item 38, Chaisson Papers (General Officers Collection, MCHC)

Deployment Plans Change: More Marines Stay Longer

54. Van Ryzin Transcript, pp. 3-6.
55. MACV ComdHist, 70, Supplement, pp. 10-11; JCS msg to CinCPac, dtd 1Aug70; JCS msg to CincPac, dtd 4Aug70, in III MAF G-3 KSR.
56. Fox Debrief.
57. Undated notes, Aug 70 in III MAF G-3 KSR; HQMC Message Files.
58. HQMC Message Files; CGIIIMAF msg to 1st MAW and 1stMarDiv, dtd 12Sept70, III MAF G-3 KSR.
59. Simmons, "Marine Operations," p. 138.
60. 3d MAB Fact Sheet, Subj: Keystone Redeployment Update, dtd 1May71, in 1stMarDiv Documents.
61. CGIIIMAF msg to CMC, dtd 29Sep70, III MAF G-3 KSR; MACV ComdHist, 70, I, ch. 4, pp. 24-26.
62. Briefing for Gen McCutcheon on Proposed MAB Organization, dtd 20Aug70, in 1stMarDiv Documents.
63. HQMC Message Files.

CHAPTER 5

OFFENSIVES AND REDEPLOYMENTS: IMPERIAL LAKE, CATAWBA FALLS, AND KEYSTONE ROBIN ALPHA, JULY-OCTOBER 1970

Unless otherwise noted, material for this chapter is derived from: FMFPac, MarOpsV, Aug and Sep70; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Aug70; 7th Mar ComdC, Aug 70; Derning Debrief; Col Ralph F. Estey, debriefing at FMFPac, dtd 14Dec70, Tape 4979 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Estey Debrief.

Preliminaries to Imperial Lake

1. Derning Debrief.
2. Estey Debrief.
3. Derning Debrief.
4. 3/7 FragO 3-70, drd 20Jun70, in 3/7 ComdC, Jun70; Derning Debrief.
5. 3/7 ComdC, Jun70.
6. Col Edmund G. Derning, Jr., Comments on draft ms, 25Jul83 (Vietnan Comment File), hereafter Derning Comments.
7. 7th Mar FragO 35-70, dtd 23Aug70, in 7th Mar ComdC, Aug70; 1/7 ComdC, Aug-Sep70; 2/7 ComdC, Aug-Sep70; 3/7 ComdC, Aug-Sep70.
8. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Aug70, pp. 7, 25-26.
9. 7th Mar, Opn Ripley Center CAAR, dtd 27Sep70, Box 12, 1stMarDiv Admin Files; 2/7 ComdC, Aug70; 2/7 Jnl, 30Aug70, in Ibid.

Operation Imperial Lake

Additional materials for this section are: 1stMarDiv ComdC, Sep70; 7th Mar ComdC, Sep70.

10. CG1stMarDiv msg to 1stMarDiv, dtd 30Aug70, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Aug70; 7th Mar OpO 4-70, dtd 30Aug70, 7th Mar ComdC, Aug70; 2/7, OpO 12-70, dtd 30Aug70, 2/7 ComdC, Aug70.
11. 11th Mar ComdC, Aug70; 3/11 ComdC, Aug70.
12. Col Robert H. Piehl, comments on draft ms, 23Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File).
13. 2/7 ComdC, Sep70; 1st MAW ComdCs, Aug-Sep70.
14. 2/7 ComdC, Sep70; 2/7 Jnl, 5-12Sept70, in ibid.
15. Ibid.

16. 2/7 ComdC, Sep70; for LtCol Albers's comments on the "duck hunter" scheme of maneuver, see 1stMarDiv, Press Release No. 1057-70, dtd 21Oct70, in 1stMarDiv Press Releases, Oct70; see also LtCol Vincent A. Albers, comments on draft ms, 16Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File).
17. 3/11 ComdC, Sep70.
18. 3/7 CAAR Opn Nebraska Rapids, dtd 17 Sep70, in 3/7 ComdC, Sep70.
19. 7th Mar ComdC, Sep70; 3/7 ComdC, Sep70; 3/11 ComdC, Sep70.
20. 7th Mar ComdC, Sep70, p. 16; 2/7 ComdC, Sep70; 2/7 Jnl, 18Sep70, in Ibid.
21. 2/7 ComdC, Sep70.
22. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Sep70, pp. 22-23; for the 2d Battalion claims, see 2/7 ComdC, Sep70.

Keystone Robin Alpha Redeployments Begin

Additional materials for this section are: FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jul-Sep70; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jul-Sep70; 1st MAW ComdC, Jul-Sep70; Simmons, "Marine Operations."

23. MAG-13 ComdC, Sep70.
24. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Sep70, p. 26.
25. LtGen Keith B. McCutcheon msg to LtGens Sutherland and Lam, dtd 5Sep70, HQMC Message Files.
26. 1stMarDiv, Warning Order, dtd 3Sep70, in 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 1-5Sep70.
27. 1stMarDiv, FragO 47-70, dtd 8Sep70, 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 6-12Sep70.
28. 1stMarDiv, Agenda Item for 1stMarDiv, 2d ROKMC Brig, QDSZ Wkly Conference Scheduled for 11Sep70, Subj: Realignment of TAOR Boundaries and Establishment of RVNAF AOs, dtd 9Sep70, in QDSZ Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents; 1stMarDiv C/S memo, Subj: Summary of Discussion – QDSZ/2d ROKMC Bde/1stMarDiv Conference, dtd 19Sep70, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Sept70.
29. Co G/2/5, Cupp Progress Rept for Sep70, dtd 4Oct70, in 2/5 ComdC, Sep70; 1/7ComdC, Sep70.

Operation Catawba Falls

Additional material for this section is: 2/11 CAAR, Opn Catawba Falls, dtd 9Oct70, Box 12, 1stMarDiv Admin Files, hereafter 2/11 Catawba Falls CAAR.

30. 5th Mar ComdC, Aug70; 3/5 ComdC, Aug70.
31. 3/5 ComdC, Aug70.
32. 1stMarDiv FragO 52-70, dtd 16Sep70, in 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 13-19Sep70.
33. 2/11 Catawba Falls CAAR; 2/11 ComdC, Sep70.
34. CG1stMarDiv msg to 1stMarDiv, dtd 19Sep70, 1st Mar ComdC, Sep70.
35. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Sep70; 2/11 Catawba Falls CAAR.

The Regiments Realign

36. 1st Mar ComdC, Sep70; 1/1 ComdC, Sep70; 2/1 ComdC, Sep70; 3/1 ComdC, Sep70.
37. 5th Mar ComdC, Sept70; 2/5 ComdC, Sep70; 3/5 ComdC, Sep70; 2/7 ComdC, Sep70.
38. 2/11 ComdC, Sep70; 3/11 ComdC, Sep70.
39. 1/5 ComdC, Sep and Oct70.
40. 7th Mar ComdC, Sep-Oct70; 1/7 ComdC, Sep-Dec70; 2/7 ComdC, Sep and 1-12Oct70; 3/7 ComdC, Sep-Oct70.
41. *Sea Tiger*, 9Oct70, in 3/5 ComdC, Oct70.
42. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Oct70, pp. 27-29; III MAF ComdC, Oct70, p. 20; 1st MarDiv ComdC, Sep-Oct70.
43. 1stMarDiv, FragO 55-70, dtd 11Oct70; 1st Marines FragO 38-70, dtd 12Oct70, 1st Mar msg, Subj: Execution of 1st Mar FragO 38-70, dtd 15Oct70; all in 1st Mar ComdC, Oct70. CG1stMarDiv msg to 1st Mar, 5th Mar, 11th Mar, 1st Engr Bn, 11th MTBn, dtd 14Oct70, in 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 11-19Oct70; Col James G. Dixon, comments on draft ms, 11May83 (Vietnam Comment File).
44. CO1stMar msg to 1st Mar, dtd 15Oct70, in 1st Mar ComdC, Oct70; 5th Mar ComdC, Oct70; 2/5 ComdC, Oct70.

CHAPTER 6

THE FALL-WINTER CAMPAIGN IN QUANG NAM, OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1970

Unless otherwise noted, source material for this chapter is drawn from: FMFPac, MarOpsV, Oct-Dec70; III MAF ComdC, Oct-Dec70; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Oct-Dec70; Estey Debrief.

New Campaign Plans and Changes in Tactics

1. XXIV Corps/MR1 Combined Fall-Winter Military Campaign Plan, 1971, dtd 8Sept70, Box 5, 1stMarDiv Admin Files.
2. MACV ComdHist, 70, I, ch. 2, pp. 11-17.
3. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Oct70, pp. 3-4, 13-14.
4. Estey Debrief.
5. 1stMarDiv, FragO 62-70, dtd 19Oct70, in 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 20-31Oct70.
6. BGen E. H. Simmons memo to CGFMFPac, dtd 24May71; 2/1 ComdC, Sept70.
7. CG1stMarDiv msg to COs, 1st, 5th, 11th Mar, dtd 19Oct70, in 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 20-31Oct70; Col P. X. Kelley ltr to CG1stMarDiv, Subj: Restricted Fires on Intel and Preemptive Targets, dtd 20Oct70, Box 6, 1stMarDiv Admin Files; 11th Mar ComdC, Oct-Dec70.
8. LtGen K. B. McCutcheon msg to LtGen W. K. Jones, dtd 2Dec70, HQMC Message Files.
9. 1st MAW ComdC, Oct70; Estey Debrief; Maj Gen Alan J. Armstrong intvw, 25Sept73, pp. 24-26 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter, Atmstrong Transcript.
10. Armstrong Transcript, pp. 25-26.
11. 1st Mar ComdC, Nov70.
12. 1st Recon Bn ComdC, Oct70, pt. 2; 1stMarDiv, G-3 Briefing Notes, dtd 5Dec70, in 1stMarDiv Documents.
13. 1stMarDiv FragO 61-70, dtd 18Oct70, in 1stMarDiv ComdC, Oct70; for an account of the 7th Marines' plan, see Derning Debrief.
14. 1stMarDiv FragO 60-70, dtd 6Dec70, in 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 1-11Dec70; Estey Debrief.

The Course of the Fall-Winter Campaign

Additional sources for this section are: FMFPac, MarOpsV, Oct-Dec70; and 1stMarDiv ComdC, Oct-Dec70.

15. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Sep70, p. 17; Oct70, pp. 15-16; Nov70, pp. 14-15; Dec70, pp. 14-15.
16. FMFPac MarOpsV, Oct70, pp. 2, 26.
17. 5th Mar ComdC, Oct-Nov70; 1/1 ComdC, Oct70, pt. 3; 2/1 ComdC, Oct70, pt. 2 and tab 4-27.
18. Col Rex C. Denny, Jr., comments on draft ms, 6Jul83 (Vietnam Comment File); Gen Kenneth McLennan, comments on draft ms, 28Jun83 (Vietnam Comment File).
19. 1st Mar ComdC, Oct70, pt. 2, sec C, p. 5.
20. Col John W. Chism, USA, comments on draft ms, 19Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File).
21. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Oct70, pp. 20-21; MAG-16 ComdC, Oct70, pt. II.
22. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Nov70; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Nov70, pp. 4, 7, 13-14.
23. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, p. 38; LtGen McCutcheon msg to LtGen Jones, dtd 10Nov70, HQMC Message Files.
24. 1stMarDiv FragO 70-70, dtd 17Dec70; CG1stMarDiv msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 19Dec70; both in 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 12-20Dec70.

Operation Imperial Lake Continues

Additional sources for this section are: 1stMarDiv ComdC, Oct-Dec70; CG1stMarDiv msg to CGIIIMAF, Subj: Opn Imperial Lake, dtd 4Dec70, in 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 1-11Dec70, hereafter 1stMarDiv, IMP LK Rept; 5th Mar ComdC, Oct-Dec70; Estey Debrief.

25. 5th Mar FragO 37-70, dtd 29Sept70, in 5th Mar ComdC, Sept70; 5th Mar FragO 38-70, dtd 11Oct70, in 5th Mar ComdC, Oct70; 1/5 ComdC, Oct70; 3/5 ComdC, Oct70.
26. 1st Recon Bn ComdC, Oct70, pt. 2; 5th Mar ComdC, Oct70, pt. 2; 1stMarDiv, IMP LK Rept.
27. 5th Mar FragO 39-70, dtd 18Oct70, in 5th Mar ComdC, Oct70; 1stMarDiv, IMP LK Rept.
28. 1/5 ComdC, Oct70, pt. 2; 2/5 ComdC, pts. 2 and 3; 1stMarDiv Press Release 1096-70, dtd 31Oct70, in 1stMarDiv Press Releases, Oct70.
29. 2/5 ComdC, Oct70, pt. 2; 1stMarDiv Press Release 1099-70, dtd 28Oct70, in 1stMarDiv Press Releases, Oct70.
30. 2/5 ComdC, Oct70, pt. 3; 1stMarDiv Press Release 1118-70, dtd 14Nov70, in 1stMarDiv Press Releases, Oct70.
31. 1st Recon Bn, Patrol Debriefing, Policy Game (PPB), Co A, dtd 1Nov70, tab A-38 in 1st Recon Bn ComdC, Oct70; 2/5 ComdC, Oct70, pt. 3; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Oct70, pp. 21-22; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Oct70, p. 6.
32. 5th Mar ComdC, Oct70, pt. 3.
33. 1stMarDiv, IMP LK Rept; 1/5 ComdC, Nov70, pts. 1 and 2; 2/5 ComdC, Nov70, pt. 2; 3/5 ComdC, Nov70, pts. 2 and 3.
34. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Nov70, p. 18; LtGen McCutcheon msg to LtGen Jones, dtd 10Nov70, HQMC Message Files; 1/5 ComdC, Nov70, pt. 2.
35. 2/5 ComdC, Nov70, pt. 3; 5th Mar ComdC, Nov70, pt. 2.
36. This quotation, and other biographical material on LtCol Leftwich, is from LtCol William G. Leftwich biographical file (RefSec, MCHC).
37. Patrol Debrief Rush Act, dtd 27Nov70, Patrol Report, Warcloud Impossible and Wage Earner, dtd 22Nov70, both in 1st Recon Bn ComdC, Nov70; see also ibid., p. 3; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Nov70, p. 19.
38. Col Franklin A. Hart, Jr., comments on draft ms, 5Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File).
39. 1stMarDiv, IMP LK Rept; 1st Mar ComdC, Dec70; 2/1 ComdC, Dec70, pt. 3; 1/5 ComdC, Dec70; 2/5 ComdC, Dec70, pt. 2; 3/5 ComdC, pts. 2 and 3.
40. Estey Debrief.
41. 5th Mar ComdC, Dec70, pt. 3; 3/5 (Fwd), Imperial Lake Jnl, 24-25Dec70, in 3/5 ComdC, Dec70.
42. 1st MAW ComdC, Oct70, p. 4, Nov70, p. 4, Dec70, p. 4; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Nov70, pp. 2-3; 3/5 ComdC, Dec70, pt. 3.
43. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Dec70, p. 20.
44. Estey Debrief.

5th Marines in the Lowlands: Noble Canyon and Tulare Falls I and II

45. 2/5 ComdC, Oct-Dec70.
46. 3/5 ComdC, Oct-Dec70.
47. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Oct70, p. 22, Nov70, p. 21; 5th Mar ComdC, Oct70, pt. 2; 3/5 ComdC, Oct-Nov70.
48. 1stMarDiv Press Release 1154-70, dtd 10Dec70, in 1stMarDiv Press Releases, Dec70.
49. 5th Mar ComdC, Nov70, pt. 2, and 5th Mar Sitrep, dtd 4Nov70, in ibid.; 2/5 ComdC, Nov70.
50. 1stMarDiv, IMP LK Rept; 1stMarDiv FragO 56-70, dtd 1Oct70, tab B-49, in 1stMarDiv ComdC, Oct70; 5th Mar OpO 3-70, dtd 1Oct70, in 5th Mar ComdC, Oct70; for casualties, see ibid., pt. 2; MACV ComdHist, 70, III, p. E15; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Oct70, p. 6.
51. CG1stMarDiv msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 27Oct70, in 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 20-31Oct70; 5th Mar ComdC, Oct-Nov70.
52. Estey Debrief; 1stMarDiv, G-3 Briefing Notes, dtd 5Dec70, 1stMarDiv Documents.
53. 3/5 Jnl, 3Dec70, in 3/5 ComdC, Dec70.
54. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Dec70, p. 17; 5th Mar ComdC, Dec70, pt. 2.

1st Marines Operations, October-December 1970

Additional sources for this section are: 1stMarDiv ComdCs, Oct-Dec70; and 1st Mar ComdCs, Oct-Dec70.

55. 1st Mar FragO 040-70, dtd 21Oct70, in 1st Mar ComdC, Oct70; 1st Mar FragO 043-70, dtd 18Dec70, in 1st Mar ComdC, Dec70.
56. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Sept70, p. 22; 1st Mar ComdC, Sept70; 1/1 ComdC, Sept70, pt. 3.
57. For day-by-day events of the siege, see 1/1 ComdC, Oct70, pt. 3; 1stMar ComdC, Oct70; 1stMarDiv Press Release 1070-70, dtd 17Oct70, in 1stMarDiv Press Releases, Oct70.
58. 1/1 ComdC, Oct-Nov70.
59. CG1stMarDiv msg to 1st and 11th Mar, dtd 24Oct70, in 1st MarDiv Jnl File, 20-31Oct70; CG1stMarDiv msg to III MAF, dtd 8Dec70, 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 1-11Dec70; 1st Mar Sitreps, 7 and 13Dec70, in 1st Mar ComdC, Dec70; 1/1 ComdC, Nov70, pt. 1, Dec70.
60. 2/1 ComdC, Oct70; 2/1 FragO 39-70, dtd 10Nov70, tab 2-2 in ibid., Nov70.
61. 2/1 S-2 Jnl, 15-16Nov70, in 2/1 ComdC, Nov70.
62. 2/1 S-2 Jnl, 18Nov70, in 2/1 ComdC, Nov70; see also ibid., pts. 2 and 3; 1st Mar ComdC, Nov70; Grinalds Debrief.
63. 2/1 ComdC, Dec70, pt. 3.
64. 3/1 ComdC, Oct-Dec70.
65. Ibid., Nov70; 1st Mar Sitrep, dtd 7Nov70, in 1st Mar ComdC, Nov70.

66. 3/1 FragO 44-70, dtd 31Dec70, in 3/1 ComdC, Dec70.
67. 1st Mar ComdC, Nov-Dec70; 2/1 S-3 Journal, 28Nov70, in 2/1 ComdC, Nov70; 1/1 ComdC, Dec70, pt. 1.
68. 1st Mar ComdC, Oct-Dec70; 1/1, 2/1, and 3/1 ComdCs, Oct-Dec70.
69. 1st Mar msg to 2/1, dtd 16Dec70 (passing on message from 1stMarDiv of 13Dec70), tab 4-20, in 2/1 ComdC, Dec70.
70. Casualty and rocket statistics are compiled from 1st Mar ComdCs, Oct-Dec70.

The War in Quang Nam at the End of the Year

71. 1stMarDiv, Command Information Summary, G-1 Section, dtd 31Dec70, 1stMarDiv Documents.
72. 1stMarDiv, G-2 Briefing Notes, dtd 1Dec70; 1stMarDiv, Command Information Summary, G-2 Overview, dtd 31Dec70; both in 1stMarDiv Documents; III MAF ComdC, Oct-Dec70.
73. BGen E. H. Simmons memo to CGFMFPac, Subj: Debriefing, Vietnam Service, 15Jun70-24May71, dtd 24May71, 1stMarDiv Documents, hereafter Simmons Debrief; see also 1stMarDiv, Command Information Summary, G-3 Overview, dtd 31Dec70, in 1stMarDiv Documents.

PART III
Pacification

CHAPTER 7

PACIFICATION 1970: PLANS, ORGANIZATION, AND PROBLEMS

Unless otherwise noted, the information contained in this chapter is drawn from MACV ComdHist, 70; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Dec70; and Chester L. Cooper, Judith E. Corson, Laurence J. Legere, David E. Lockwood, and Donald M. Weller, *The American Experience with Pacification in Vietnam*, 3 vols. (Arlington, Va.: Institute for Defense Analyses, 1972), hereafter *IDA Pacification Study*. Documents from the supporting material for the latter study will be cited as Pacification Study Docs. This chapter also draws much material from: Col W. W. Hixson, debriefing at FMFPac, 5Oct70, Tape No. 4698 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Hixson Debrief and Col C. J. Peabody, debriefing at FMFPac, 8Sept70, Tape No. 4956 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Peabody Debrief.

Pacification: The Nationwide Perspective

1. Commandant Jacques Hogard, "Guerre Revolutionaire et Pacification," *Review Militaire d'Information*; Jan57, pp. 21-24; quoted in *IDA Pacification Study*, 3, p.107.
2. III MAF/ICTZ Combined Campaign Plan 1970, dtd 13Dec69, Anx R, pp. 19-20.
3. *IDA Pacification Study*, 3, pp. 280-282, 314-315.
4. Ibid., 2, pp. 268-271.

The 1970 GVN Pacification and Development Plan

An additional source for this section is Republic of Vietnam, Central Pacification and Development Council, Plan for Pacification and Development 1970, in Pacification Study Docs, hereafter cited as GVN 1970 P&D Plan.

5. MACV ComdHist, 70, II, ch. 8, p. 4; Gen C. W. Abrams ltr to Distribution List, Subj: GVN 1970 Pacification and Development Plan, n.d., in GVN 1970 P&D Plan.
6. *IDA Pacification Study*, 3, p. 313.
7. GVN 1970 P&D Plan, p. 1.
8. Ibid., pp. 5-12.
9. MACV ComdHist, 70, II, ch. 8, p. 56.
10. GVN 1970 P&D Plan, pp. 16-18.

Pacification Plans and Organization in Military Region 1

All quotations from Colonel Hixson not otherwise footnoted are taken from the Hixson Debrief.

11. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec69, pp. 24-31, Feb70, pp. 11-13.
12. Ibid., Jan70, pp. 12-15.
13. The following description of the CORDS organization in ICTZ is drawn from: FMFPac, MarOpsV, Summary and Overview, pp. 45, 47-48; Hixson Debrief; MACV ComdHist,70, II, ch. 7, p. 66.
14. Hixson Debrief.
15. Ibid.
16. LtCol Warren E. Parker, USA, comments on draft ms, 11Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter Parker Comments.

Pacification Situation in Quang Nam, Early 1970

An additional source for this section is: LtCol Warren E. Parker, USA (Ret.), PSA, Quang Nam, Completion of Tour Report, dtd 20Apr70, in the files of the U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, D.C. (CMH), hereafter Parker Report.

17. Fact Sheets on Quang Nam Province Government and American and Vietnamese Support, in QSDZ Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents.
18. Maj J. S. Grinalds intvw, 8May71, pp. 7-9 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Grinalds Transcript.
19. Col Nguyen Van Thien, QDSZ, memo, dtd 16Jan70, in QDSZ Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents.
20. Col Ennis C. Whitehead, Jr., USA, AsstDepCORDS (Military), memo, Subj: Relationships in Quang Da Special Zone, dtd 18Jul70, in QDSZ Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents.
21. Fact Sheets on Quang Nam Province Government and American and Vietnamese Support, in QDSZ Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents; monthly reports of PSA, Quang Nam, to MACCORDS, in files of the U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, D.C., hereafter cited as CMH Files.
22. Parker Comments.
23. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Summary and Overview, p. 41; III MAF and 1stMarDiv ComdCs, Jan-Dec 70; Hixson Debrief; Peabody Debrief.
24. Simmons Debrief; the quotation is from undated memo in 1stMarDiv ComdC, Aug70, tab B-21; the same source contains memos for the record of the conferences; other records of the conferences are contained in QDSZ Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents.
25. Simmons Debrief.
26. Parker Report.
27. Ibid.; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Apr70, pp. 19-20; PSA, Quang Nam, Report to MACCORDS for Period 1-31May70, dtd 1Jun70, in CMH Files.

28. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar70, p. 12, gives the HES figures for the end of February 1970. For continued VC underground and guerrilla strength, consult Grinalds Transcript, passim. See also III MAF/ICTZ Combined Campaign Plan 1970, dtd 13Dec69, Anx R, pp. 20-1.
29. Parker Report.
30. Hixson Debrief.
31. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, p. 27; Peabody Debrief.
32. Col P.X. Kelley ltr to CG1stMarDiv, Subj: Restricted Fires on Intel and Preemptive Targets, dtd 20Oct70, Box 6, 1stMarDiv Admin Files.

CHAPTER 8

THE STRUGGLE FOR SECURITY: COMBINED ACTION

Unless otherwise noted, the information contained in this chapter is drawn from MACV ComdHist, 70; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Dec70; and *IDA Pacification Study* and Pacification Study Docs.

Combined Action Platoons

Additional sources for this section are: Combined Action Force Fact Sheet, dtd 31Mar70, in CAF History & SOP Folder, Box 2, Pacification Study Docs, hereaftet CAF Fact Sheet; Col T. H. Metzger, debriefing at FMFPac, dtd 13 July 70, Tape 4899 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Metzger Debrief; Lt Col J. J. Tolnay, debriefing at FMFPac, dtd 19May71, Tape 5009 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Tolnay Debrief.

1. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan70, pp. 19-20; CAF ComdC, Jan70; 1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th CAG ComdCs, Jan70.
2. CAF ComdC, Jan-Feb70.
3. CGXXIV Corps LOI to COCAF, dtd 3May70, in CAF ComdC, Mar70; ibid., Jul70.
4. III MAF O 3121.4B, Subj: SOP for the Combined Action Program, dtd 22Jun68, in CAF History and SOP Folder, Box 2, Pacification Study Docs; CGXXIV Corps, LOI to COCAF, dtd 3May70, in CAF ComdC, Mar70; CAF Fact Sheet; Tolnay Debrief; Col Theodore E. Metzger, comments on draft ms, 22Mar83 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter Metzger Comments.
5. Metzger Comments.
6. Consul F. T. McNamara, Political Advisor to CGXXIV Corps, ltr to LtGen Melvin Zais, dtd 14Mar70 and Col T. H. Metzger ltr to CGXXIV Corps via C/S XXIV Corps, Subj: Consulate-CORDS Survey of CAP villages, comments concerning, dtd 24Mar70, both in CAF History & SOP Folder, Box 2, Pacification Study Docs, hereafter Metzger ltr Mar70.
7. Metzger Debrief; CAF Fact Sheet.
8. For curriculm of the school, see CAF ComdC, Feb70.
9. Metzger Debrief.
10. Metzger ltr Mar70; 3d CAG ComdC, Mar70, pt. II; 2d CAG ComdC, Oct70, pts. I and II.
11. CGXXIV Corps LOI to COCAF, dtd 3May70, in CAF ComdC, Mar70.
12. Metzger Debrief; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec69, p. 32; CAF Fact Sheet, see especially Encl 7, "A Discussion of the Mobile CAP Concept;" 4th CAG ComdC, May-Jun70. For the change in mission of the RF and PF, see MACV ComdHist, 70, II, ch. 8, p. 31.
13. 2d CAG ComdC, Mar70, pt. II; for month-by-month CAG operations, see 1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th CAG ComdCs, Jan70 through month of deactivation.
14. CAF Fact Sheet; Metzger Debrief
15. CAF Fact Sheet.
16. 4th CAG ComdC, Jan-Feb70; 3d CAG ComdC, Jan and Mar70.
17. Metzger Debrief.
18. Tolnay Debrief.
19. 3d CAG ComdC, May-Jun70.
20. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar70, p. 14, Dec70, p. 32; CAF ComdC, May70, pt. III; 1st CAF ComdC, Mar, Jul70; 2d CAG ComdC, Feb-Apr, Aug70; 4th CAG ComdC, Apr-May70.
21. LtCol D. F. Seiler ltr to COCAF, Subj: Vietnamization of CAP Areas in the 1st CAG, dtd 19Apr70, in CAF ComdC, May70, hereafter Seiler ltr.
22. Ibid.
23. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Apr70, p. 17.
24. For civic action details and statistics, see 1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th CAG ComdCs, Jan through month of deactivation 70.
25. Metzger Comments.
26. Metzger Debrief; Metzger also believed that the CAGs needed full-time chaplains and more medical and dental services for their Marines.
27. Grinalds Transcript, pp. 92-93; the quotation is from Tolnay Debrief.
28. Grinalds Transcript, pp. 92-93.
29. Tolnay Debrief.
30. Tom Harvey, comments on draft ms, 16Jan84 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter Harvey Comments.
31. Metzger ltr Mar70; Seiler ltr; 1st CAG ComdC, Feb70, pt. II; 4th CAF ComdC, Jan-Jul70.
32. 4th CAG ComdC, Feb70, p. 11.
33. 4th CAG Spot Report, dtd 12Jan70, in 4th CAG ComdC, Jan70.
34. Grinalds Transcript, pp. 92-96; Metzger Debrief; for the ambush of the Binh Ky CAP, which occurred on 8Jul, see 2/1 S-2 Jnl, 8Jul70 and S-3 Jnl 8Jul70, both in 2/1 ComdC, Jul70.
35. Harvey Comments.
36. Tolnay Debrief. The CORDS survey early in 1970 found village response to CAPs generally favorable; see Consul Francis T. McNamara, Political Advisor to CG XXIV Corps, ltr to LtGen Melvin Zais, dtd 14Mar70, in CAF SOP & History Folder, Box 2, Pacification Study Docs.
37. CAF Fact Sheet; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Summary and Overview, p. 39.
38. Francis J. West, Jr., *The Village* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), pp. 283-287.

Reducing the Combined Action Force

39. LtGen H. Nickerson, Jr., debriefing at HQMC, 17May70, Tape 6000 (Oral HistColl, MCHC); BGen G. E. Dooley, debriefing at FMFPac, dtd 23Dec69, Tape 4733 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).
40. Dulacki Debrief.
41. HQMC Message Files.
42. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Feb70, p. 15; May70, pp. 17-18; CAF ComdC, Apr70, pt. III; 2d CAG ComdC, Feb70, pt. II; May70, pt. II; 3d CAG ComdC, Apr70, pt. II; 4th CAG ComdC, Apr70, pt. II; Metzger ltr Mar70.

43. CAF ComdC, May-Jun70.
44. Metzger Debrief; CAF ComdC, Jul70; 4th CAG ComdC, Jul70, pt. II.
45. CAF ComdC, Aug70, pts. II and III; Sep70; 1st CAG ComdC, 1-13 Sep70, pt. II; 2d CAG ComdC, Aug70, pts. II and III, Sep70, pts. I and II; 3d CAG ComdC, Jul70, pt. II; Aug70, pt. II, 1-7Sep70, pt. II.
46. 4th CAG ComdC, Jul70, pt. II; 1st CAG ComdC, Jun-Aug70; 3d CAG ComdC, Aug70, pt. II.
47. CAF ComdC, Sep70; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Sep70, p. 12.
48. 2d CAG OpO, dtd 23Dec70, in Miscellanous Sheets/Documents Folder, Box 4, Pacification Study Docs.
49. Tolnay Debrief.
50. 2d CAG ComdC, Sep-Nov70.
51. Ibid., Sep-Dec70; Tolnay Debrief.
52. Col Don R. Christensen, comments on draft ms, 12Jul83 (Vietnam Comment File).
53. This quotation, and unless otherwise noted, the material in the rest of this section is drawn from Tolnay Debrief.
54. Spot Reports, dtd 1 and 3Mar71, III MAF Jnl File, 1-12Mar71.

Building on Success: The Combined Unit Pacification Program

In this section, extensive use has been made of two sets of interviews: Capt D. J. Robinson II, et. al., M/3/1 in the CUPP intvws by 1stMarDiv Historical Team, 18Jan70, Tape 4735; and 1stLt T. M. Calvert, et.al., A/1/7 in the CUPP intvws by 1stMarDiv Historical Team, 25-27 May70, Tape 4848, both in Oral HistColl, MCHC. These tapes will be cited respectively hereafter as 1st Mar CUPP Intvws and 7th Mar CUPP Intvws, preceded by name of interviewee.

55. Dulacki intvw, pp. 68-70.
56. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Nov69, pp. 17-18, Dec69, pp. 35-36.
57. Col J. W. Haggerty III, debriefing at FMFPac, 15Oct70, Tape 4965 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Haggerty Debrief; 3/5 FragO 9-70, dtd 6Feb70, in 3/5 ComdC, Feb70; Capt D. J. Robinson II, 1st Mar CUPP Intvws.
58. Haggerty Debrief.
59. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan70, pp. 21-22; 1st Mar ComdC, Jan70; 7th Mar CUPP Progress Report, dtd Jan70, in 7th Mar ComdC, Jan70; 3/26 ComdC, Jan70; 3/5 ComdC, Feb70.
60. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar70, p. 15, Apr70, p. 18; 1st Mar ComdC, Mar70; 3/5 ComdC, Mar70; 7th Mar CUPP Progress Report, Jan70, in 7th Mar ComdC, Jan70.
61. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Sep70; 5th Mar CUPP Progress Report, Sep70, in 2/5 ComdC, Sep70; 5th Mar CUPP Progress Report, Dec70, in 2/5 ComdC, Dec70; 2/1 ComdC, Sep70; 3/5 ComdC, Sep70.
62. 7th Mar CUPP Progress Report, Jan70, in 7th Mar ComdC, Jan70; for comparison, see Capt D. J. Robinson II, 1st Mar CUPP Intvws.
63. 3/5 FragO 9-70, dtd 6Feb70, in 3/5 ComdC, Feb70.
64. Sgt Danny H. Walker, 7th Mar CUPP Intvws; 1stLt T. M. Calvert, 1st Mar CUPP Intvws; 3/5 ComdC, Jul70.
65. 7th Mar CUPP Progress Report, Apr70, in 7th Mar ComdC, Apr70.
66. FMFPac, MarOpsV, May70, p. 20; 7th Mar CUPP Progress Reports, Jan, Mar, Apr, Jun, and Jul70, in 7th Mar ComdCs, Jan Mar, Apr, Jun, and Jul70; 5th Mar CUPP Progress Report, Sep70, in 2/5 ComdC, Sep70; 3/5 ComdC, Apr-Jun70.
67. 5th Mar CUPP Progress Report, Nov-Dec70, in 2/5 ComdC, Nov-Dec70.
68. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Nov70, p. 12; 7th Mar CUPP Progress Reports, Jan-Sep70, in 7th Mar ComdCs, Jan-Sep70; 5th Mar CUPP Progress Report, Sep-Dec70, in 2/5 ComdCs, Sep-Dec70.
69. Cpl Mitchell Y. Jefferies, 7th Mar CUPP Intvws.
70. 2dLt R. H. Mansfield III, 7th Mar CUPP Intvws.
71. 2dLt G. T. Olshevsky, 1st Mar CUPP Intvws.
72. 2dLt J. D. Hopkins, 1st Mar CUPP Intvws; Sgt D. H. Walker, 7th Mar CUPP Intvws.
73. PFC D. A. Bronzy, 7th Mar CUPP Intvws; Capt D. J. Robinson II, 1st Mar CUPP Intvws.
74. 3/26 ComdC, Jan7, pt. III.
75. Sgt D. H. Walker, 7th Mar CUPP Intvws.
76. 7th Mar CUPP Progress Report, Jan70, in 7th Mar ComdC, Jan70; 2dLt R. H. Mansfield III, 7th Mar CUPP Intvws.
77. Cpl M. Y. Jefferies, 7th Mar CUPP Intvws.
78. 2dLt R. H. Mansfields III, ibid.
79. 7th Mar CUPP Progress Report, Jan70, in 7th Mar ComdC, Jan70; for additional impressions of village reaction to the CUPPs, consult 1st Mar and 7th Mar CUPP Intvws, passim.
80. Sgt W. J. Dignan, 1st Mar CUPP Intvws.
81. Cpl M. Y. Jefferies, 7th Mar CUPP Intvws.
82. 7th Mar CUPP Progress Report, Mar70, in 7th Mar ComdC; CUPP actions and casualties can be followed month by month in the 7th Mar CUPP Progress Report, 7th Mar ComdC, Jan-Sep70; the 5th Mar CUPP Progress Report, in 2/5 ComdC, Sep-Dec70; and in FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Dec70, section on Pacification and Rural Development. Simmons Debrief gives a division-level evaluation of the CUPP program.
83. 7th Mar CUPP Progress Report, Jul70, in 7th Mar ComdC, Jul70; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Nov70, p. 12.
84. Derning Debrief.

CHAPTER 9

THE SPECTRUM OF PACIFICATION AND VIETNAMIZATION, 1970

Unless otherwise noted, the information contained in this chapter is drawn from MACV ComdHist, 70; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Dec70; and *IDA Pacification Study* and Pacification Study Docs.

Line Units in Pacification

1. For the plans for a typical large County Fair in 1970, see 2/1 OpOrder 001-70, dtd 22May70, in 2/1 ComdC, May70; for results of this cordon and search, see 2/1 S-3 Jnl, 27May70, in Ibid.
2. 3/1 ComdC, Oct, Nov, Dec70; Grinalds Debrief.
3. Grinalds Debrief. LtGen Zais, the XXIV Corps commander, favored shorter County Fairs to minimize civilian resentment; see LtGen M. Zais, USA, Opening Remarks at XXIV Corps Commanders' Conference, 22Mar70, in Melvin Zais Papers, U.S. Army Military History Research Collection, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.
4. 1stMarDiv Staff Memo, Subj: Summary of Discussion, QDSZ Conference, 20Mar70, dtd 23Mar70, in 1stMarDiv ComdC, Aug70, tab B-21; III MAF OPlan 18-70 (Rice Denial), dtd 9Sep70, in III MAF ComdC, Sep70.

5. MACV ComdHist, 70, ch. 8, pp. 61-66; 1stMarDiv Fact Sheet, Subj: Plans for Election Security, dtd 27Aug70, in QDSZ Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents; for a typical regimental election security order, see 7th Mar FragO 27-70, in 7th Mar ComdC, Jun70.
6. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jun70, pp. 19-20.
7. Derning Debrief; 7th Mar FragO 17-70, in 7th Mar ComdC, Apr70.
8. 2/7 OpOrder 8-70, dtd 16Apr70, in 2/7 ComdC, Apr70.
9. Derning Debrief; 2/7 ComdC, Apr-May70.
10. Derning Comments.
11. 2/7 ComdC, Apr-Jun70; 1/7 ComdC, Apr-Jun70.
12. 2/1 ComdC, Sep, Nov70; Grinalds Debrief.

Kit Carson Scouts in 1970

Additional sources for this section are: FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, pp. 15-16; 1stMarDiv, Kit Carson Scouts, Background Data, dtd 21Jun70, and 1stMarDiv, KCS Program Fact Sheet, ca. Aug70, both in Narrative Notes 1970 Notebooks, 1stMarDiv Documents.

13. For salaries see MACV ComdHist, 70, II, ch. 8 p. 74; MACV on 31Mar71 raised all KCS salaries 2,500 piastres per year to keep their wages comparable to ARVN pay scales.

Targeting the VCI

14. MACV ComdHist, 70, II, ch. 8, p. 39.
15. III MAF/ICTZ Combined Campaign Plan 1970, dtd 13Dec69, Anx R, pp. 4-5.
16. *IDA Pacification Study*, 2, 7-11; MACV ComdHist, 70, II, ch. 8, pp. 39-40; GVN 1970 P&D Plan, Anx II, pp. 2-3.
17. 1stMarDiv, Briefing Notes, "Viet Cong Infrastructure in Quang Nam Province," dtd Apr70, in Enemy OOB Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents; Grinalds Debrief; Maj J. S. Grinalds intvw, 8May71, pp. 9-15 (Oral HistColl MCHC), hereafter Grinalds Transcript.
18. Grinalds Transcript, pp. 19-20.
19. Grinalds Transcript, pp. 71-3.
20. MACV ComdHist, 70, II, ch. 8, pp. 40-41; *IDA Pacification Study*, 2, pp. 91-95; GVN 1970 P&D Plan, Anx II.
21. III MAF/ICTZ Combined Campaign Plan 1970, dtd 13Dec69, Anx C.
22. Parker Report; PSA, Quang Nam, Report to MACCORDS for 1-30Jun70, dtd 1Jul70, CMH Files.
23. Capt Charles O. Pflugrath, USA, memo to PSA, Quang Nam, Subj: Status of PHX/PH in Quang Nam Prov, dtd 26Nov70, in Quang Nam Prov PHX/PH Briefing Folder, Box 1, Pacification Study Docs, hereafter Pflugrath Memo.
24. Pflugrath Memo; Parker Report; Quang Nam PSA, Comments on Phung Hoang, Nov70, in Quang Nam Prov PHX/PH Briefing Folders, Box 1, Pacification Study Docs; Grinalds Debrief; Grinalds Transcript, pp. 34, 86-87.
25. III MAF/ICTZ Combined Campaign Plan 1970, dtd 13Dec69, Anx C.
26. 2/1 CAAR, dtd 5Aug70, in 2/1 ComdC, Aug70; Grinalds Debrief.
27. LtGen McCutcheon msg to LtGen Jones, dtd 10Nov70, HQMC Message Files; Grinalds Transcript, pp. 17-18.
28. Grinalds Debrief; Grinalds Transcript, pp. 53-54; Acting PSA, Quang Nam Province, Report to ComUSMACV, for Period 1-31Dec70, dtd 3Jan71, in CMH Files; 1st MarDiv/2d ROKMC Brig/QDSZ Conference Agenda, dtd 4Dec70, in QDSZ Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents.
29. Grinalds Debrief; LtGen McCutcheon msg to LtGen Sutherland, dtd 6Dec70, HQMC Message Files.
30. Grinalds Debrief.

Civic Action 1970

31. Lt D. R. Nicoll, "Civic Action—What Is It?", in U.S. 7th Air Force, Civic Action Newsletter, 31Mar70, Att. 1, hereafter cited as Nicoll, "Civic Action."
32. Col Louis S. Hollier, Comments on draft ms, 31Mar83 (Vietnam Comment File).
33. Ibid.
34. III MAF/ICTZ Combined Campaign Plan 1970, dtd 13Dec69, Anx H.
35. 1stMarDiv G-5 Overview, dtd 31Dec70, in Narrative Notes 1970 Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents.
36. Peabody Debrief.
37. Capt Meredith H. Mead, USN, comments on draft ms, 8Jun83 (Vietnam Comment File).
38. Peabody Debrief; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jun70, pp. 25-26.
39. Col Clifford J. Peabody, comments on draft ms, 19Apr86 (Vietnam Comment File).
40. Peabody Debrief; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec69, pp. 40-41; Col Khien, Prov Ch, Quang Tri, memo to CGIIIMAF, Subj: 3d MarDiv Childrens Hospital, dtd 2Sep70; 3d MAB Fact Sheet, Subj: Child Care Center, dtd May71; 3d MAB Supplemental Data Sheet C, Subj: Child Care Center, dtd 27Apr71; all in Narrative Notes 1971 Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents.
41. 3/5 ComdC, Apr70, pp. 3-8.
42. Debrief of Col Garth K. Sturdevan, C/S, FLC, dtd 12Jun70, tab E; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Aug70, p. 28; III MAF ComdC, Sep70, pp. 26-27; for an example of civic action by an aircraft group, see MAG-16 ComdC, Feb70.
43. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jun70, pp. 16-18, Dec70, p. 27; MACV ComdHist, 70, I, ch. 5, pp. 57-58; CGIstMarDiv msg to CGIIIMAF, Subj: Summary of Go Noi Island Resettlement Project, dtd 7Aug70, in 1stMarDiv ComdC, Aug70, hereafter 1stMarDiv, Go Noi Summary; Col N. L. Beck, debriefing at FMFPac, 16Jul70, Tape 4893 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Beck Debrief; and Metzger Debrief.
44. 1stMarDiv, Go Noi Summary; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jun70, pp. 18-19.
45. 1stMarDiv Staff Memo, Subj: Summary of Discussion—2d ROKMC/QDSZ/1stMarDiv Conference, 26Jun70, dtd 26Jun70, in 1stMarDiv ComdC, Aug70, tab B-21; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jun70, p. 18; 2d CAG ComdC, Jul70, pt II; Metzger Debrief.
46. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jul70, p. 23, Aug70, p. 28, Sep70, pp. 16-17, Dec70, pp. 27-28.
47. For a general discussion of the continuing doctrinal confusion over civic action, see Nicoll, "Civic Action."
48. 2d CAG ComdC, Jul70, pt. III, p. 14.
49. Peabody Debrief.
50. Ibid.
51. Grinalds Transcript, p. 103.
52. Simmons Debrief.

Communist Counter-Pacification Efforts

The continuing terrorist activity during the year can best be followed through the III MAF, 1stMarDiv, and 1st, 5th, and 7th Mar

ComdCs and the ComdCs of the 1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th CAGs for 1970 which contain the Marines' count of incidents in their areas of operation.

53. 1st CAG ComdC, Feb70, pt. III, p. 1.
54. 2d CAG ComdC, Mar70, pt. II.
55. 4th CAG ComdC, May70, pt. III; 2d CAG ComdC, Jun70, pts. II and III, see also ibid., Jul-Dec70.
56. FMFPac, MarOpsV, May70, pp. 20-21.
57. 5th Mar Jnl, 13Jun70, in 5th Mar ComdC, Jun70; 3/5 ComdC, Jun70, pt. II, and Jnl, 13Jun70.
58. PSA, Quang Nam, Report to MACCORDS for 1-31May70, dtd 1Jun70, CMH Files.
59. Grinalds Transcript, p. 56; Grinalds Debrief.
60. 3/5 Jnl, 21Mar70, in 3/5 ComdC, Mar70; this incident had a tragic aftermath when members of a CUPP unit grenaded a bunker into which they thought the VC had fled, killing two civilians, one a five-year-old boy, and wounding three others.
61. 2/1 ComdC, Sep70, pt. II, sec. C; 3/5 Jnl, 14Nov70, in 3/5 ComdC, Nov70; 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 19Dec70.
62. VC propaganda leaflet, n.d.
63. 1st CAG ComdC, Jan70, pt. III, p. 6.
64. 2d CAG ComdC, Jan70, pt. III.
65. This account of the fight at Phu Thanh is drawn from the following sources: 1st Lt Thomas S. Miller, et. al., intvws by 1stMarDiv Historical Team, dtd 15-16Jun70, Tape 4868 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Phu Thanh Interviews, preceded by name of interviewees; 7th Mar CUPP Progress Report, Jun70; in 7th Mar ComdC, Jun70; MajGen Widdecke msg to LtGen McCutcheon, dtd 11Jun70, HQMC Message Files.
66. Cpl Robert M. Mutchler, Phu Thanh Interviews.
67. Ibid.
68. Cpl Robert M. Mutchler, 1stLt Thomas M. Miller, both in Phu Thanh Interviews.
69. 1stLt Thomas M. Miller, in ibid.
70. 5th Mar Jnl, 30Aug70, in 5th Mar ComdC, Aug70.
71. Cpl Robert M. Mutchler, Phu Thanh Interviews.
72. Grinalds Transcript, pp. 104-105.

Vietnamization

73. MACV ComdHist, 70, II, ch. 7, pp. 1-3, 15-16.
74. 1stMarDiv O 5080.10, dtd 7Jun70, Supporting Document 5 in 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jun70.
75. PSA, Quang Nam, Report to MACCORDS, 1-30Jun70, dtd 1Jul70, CMH Files; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jun70, p. 25, Aug70, pp. 26-27; 1stMarDiv Staff Memo, Subj: Summary of Discussion QDSZ Conference, 24Apr70, dtd 26Apr70, in 1stMarDiv ComdC, Aug70, tab B-21.
76. These negotiations can be traced through the record of the 1stMarDiv/QDSZ/2d ROKMC Conference, tab B-21, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Aug70; 1stMarDiv G-3, QDSZ Agenda Item, dtd 19Jun70, 1stMarDiv Agenda Item for QDSZ Conference of 28Aug70, Subj: Turnover of Mine Sweeps, dtd 25Aug70, both in QDSZ Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents.
77. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Sep70, pp. 67-68; MACV ComdHist, 70, II, ch. 7, pp. 37-39; FMFPac, MarOps, Jul70, p. 21; 1st Mar ComdC, Feb70, Jun70; 3/1 ComdC, Feb70, May70, Jun70; 1/5 ComdC, Apr70.
78. 1stMarDiv Staff Memo, Subj: Summary of Discussion, QDSZ Conference, 27Mar70, dtd 28Mar70, in 1stMarDiv ComdC, Aug70, tab B-21; CGIIIMAF msg to CGXXIV Corps, dtd 22Jul70, in XXIV Corps Message Files, CMH; MajGen Armstrong msg to LtGen Sutherland, dtd 3Aug70, in HQMC Message Files; Grinalds Transcript, pp. 7-9.
79. CGIIIMAF msg to CGXXIV Corps, dtd 9Aug70, XXIV Corps Message Files, CMH; MACV ComdHist, 70, II, ch. 7, p. 99; Acting PSA, Quang Nam Province, Report to ComUSMACV for period 1-31Dec70, dtd 3Jan71, in CMH Files; favorable Marine views of the South Vietnamese forces can be found in the following interviews, all in Oral HistColl, MCHC: Grinalds Debrief; Grinalds Transcript, pp. 121-22; LtGen H. Nickerson debriefing at HQMC, 17May70, Tape 6000, hereafter Nickerson Debrief (HQMC); Col R. A. Heywood, debriefing at FMFPac, 15Dec69, Tape 4732; Col G. C. Fox, debriefing at FMFPac, 6May70, Tape 4806; Dulacki Debrief; Hixson Debrief.
80. CGIIIMAF msg to CGXXIV Corps, dtd 9Aug70; LtGen Sutherland msg to Gen Rosson, Dep ComUSMACV, dtd 10Aug70, in XXIV Corps Message Files, CMH.
81. CGIIIMAF msg to CG XXIV Corps, dtd 9Aug70, in ibid.
82. Nickerson Debrief (HQMC); Beck Debrief; *IDA Pacification Study*, 2, pp. 64-70.
83.. Grinalds Debrief; PSA, Quang Nam, Report to ComUSMACV for period 1-30Nov70, dtd 1Dec70, in CMH files.

Results, 1970

84. MACV ComdHist, 70, II, ch. 8, pp 8-11, 89-90; FMFPac, MarOpsV, May70, p. 22, Nov70, pp. 9-11.
85. *IDA Pacification Study*, 3, p. 330; see also 3, pp. 322-339.
86. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, pp. 26-29; MACV ComdHist, 70, II, ch. 8, p. 24; Acting PSA, Quang Nam Province, Report to ComUSMACV for period 1-31Dec70, dtd 3Jan71, CMH Files.
87. MACV ComdHist, 70, II, ch. 8, pp. 48-49.
88. PSA, Quang Nam Province, Report to ComUSMACV for period 1-31Jul70, dtd 2Aug70, in CMH Files.
89. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, pp. 29-30; for 1969 figure, see Dec69, p. 30; Hixson Debrief.
90. PSA, Quang Nam Province, Report to ComUSMACV for period 1-31Jul70, dtd 2Aug70, and for period 1-30Sep70, dtd 1Oct70, both in CMH Files; Hixson Debrief; Peabody Debrief; CGIIIMAF msg to CGXXIV Corps, dtd 9Aug70, in XXIV Corps Message Files, CMH.
91. Nickerson Debrief.
92. Sir Robert Thompson, *Peace Is Not at Hand* (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1974), p. 78.
93. CGIIIMAF msg to CGXXIV Corps, dtd 9Aug70, in XXIV Corps Message Files, CMH.

PART IV
Winding Up and Winding Down

CHAPTER 10

ALLIED STRATEGIC AND REDEPLOYMENT PLANS FOR 1971

Unless otherwise noted, material in this chapter is drawn from MACV ComdHist, 70 and ComdHist, 71; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Oct-Dec70; Jan-Feb71; III MAF ComdC, various dates.

Military and Pacification Plans for 1971

1. MACV, ComdHist, 71, ch. 1, pp. 7-8, ch. 4, pp. 5-8.
2. MR 1/XXIV Corps Combined Campaign Plan 1971, dtd 29Dec70, Box 9, RG 338 (71A7122), FRC, Suitland, Md., hereafter 1/XXIV Corps CCP71; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, p. 24.
3. MR 1/XXIV Corps CCP71, Anx L, LtGen James W. Sutherland, USA, Senior Officer Debriefing Report, period 18Jun70-9Jun71, dtd 31Aug71 (Copy in MCHC); XXIV Corps ORLL, period ending 30Apr71, dtd 17May71 (Copy in MCHC); XXIV Corps LOI, CCP71, dtd 5Jan71, Box 9, RG 338 (71A7122), FRC, Suitland, Md; LtGen Donn J. Robertson intvw, 24Apr73 and 24Aug76, pp. 71-72 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Robertson Transcript.
4. MACV ComdHist, 71, I, ch. 7, pp. 1, 9-10; *IDA Pacification Study*, 3, pp. 339-343.

Final Plans for Redeployment and the MAB

Additional sources for this section are: 3d MAB Planning Notebook, 1st MarDivDocuments, hereafter 3d MAB Notebook; Message Files, LtGen James W. Sutherland, in U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, D.C., hereafter Sutherland Messages.

5. Robertson Transcript; Col F. A. Hart, Jr. memo to Asst C/S G-3, 1st MarDiv, Subj: Artillery Mix for 3d MAB, dtd 4Nov70, 3d MAB Notebook; Col J. W. Haggetty, Debriefing at FMFPac, 15Oct70, Tape 4965 (Oral HistColl, MCHC); LtGen Jones msg to LtGen Van Ryzin, dtd 26Sept70, HQMC Msg Files.
6. CincPac's views are summarized in LtGen Jones msg to LtGen McCutcheon, dtd 4Nov70, HQMC Msg Files.
7. LtGen Sutherland msg to Gen Abrams, dtd 9Nov70, in Sutherland Messages.
8. Gen Abrams msg to LtGen Sutherland, USA, dtd 14Nov70, Sutherland Messages.
9. Col F. A. Hart, Jr. memo to ADC, 1st MarDiv, Subj: MAB Planning Conference of 5 November 1970, dtd 5Nov70, 3d MAB Notebook, hereafter MAB Conference Memo; Gen Abrams msg to Distribution List, dtd 3Nov70, HQMC, Msg Files.
10. MAB Options and Trooplists for 3d MAB Options, dtd 31Oct70, 3d MAB Notebook.
11. MAB Conference Memo.
12. LtGen McCutcheon msg to LtGen Jones, dtd 5Nov70, HQMC Msg Files.
13. LtGen Jones msg to Gen Chapman, dtd 7Nov70, and Gen Chapman msg to LtGen Jones, dtd 7Nov70, HQMC Msg Files; Col F. A. Hart, Jr. memo to ADC, 1stMarDiv, Subj: MAB Structure Planning, dtd 8Nov70, 3d MAB Notebook.
14. Col F. A. Hart, Jr., memo to ADC, 1stMarDiv, Subj: Increment VI Redeployment and 3d MAB Planning, dtd 10Nov70, 3d MAB Notebook.
15. Draft of msg from CG1stMarDiv to CGIIIMAF, dtd 11Nov70, 3d MAB Notebook.
16. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, p. 32.
17. MajGen Widdecke msg to LtGen McCutcheon, dtd 14Nov70 and McCutcheon msg to Widdecke, dtd 28Nov70, HQMC Msg Files.
18. The details of schedule planning can be followed in 3d MAB Notebook; III MAF ComdC, Jan71, pp. 20-26; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Dec70, p. 22.
19. MajGen Armstrong msg to LtGen Jones, dtd 15Dec70, and LtGen Jones msg to Armstrong, dtd 22Dec70, HQMC Msg Files; Organization Chart, III MAF (Rear), dtd 1Jan71, 3d MAB Notebook.
20. Simmons, "Marine Operations," p. 142; III MAF ComdC, Jan71, p. 7; LtGen Jones msg to LtGen Robertson, dtd 5Feb71, HQMC Msg Files.

A New Commander for III MAF

21. CGIIIMAF msg to ComUSMACV, dtd 20Oct70; LtGen Jones msg to LtGen McCutcheon, dtd 7Nov70; LtGen McCutcheon msg to Gen Abrams, dtd 12Nov70; ComUSMACV msg to LtGens McCutcheon, Sutherland, and Jones, dtd 14Nov70; LtGen McCutcheon msg to LtGen Jones, dtd 15Nov70; LtGen Jones msg to Gen Chapman dtd 16Nov70; all in HQMC Msg Files.
22. Lt Gen Herman Nickerson, Jr., intvw, 10Jan73, pp. 115-17 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).
23. LtGen Keith B. McCutcheon ltr to MajGen Louis Metzger, dtd 28Nov70, and ltr to MajGen George A. Bowman, dtd 11Dec70, Box 10, McCutcheon Papers; Simmons, "Marine Operations,"
24. Robertson Transcript, p. 56.

Military Situation in Quang Nam and Military Region 1, Early 1971

25. III MAF ComdC, Jan71, p. 6; FMFPac ComdC, Jan-Jun71, pt. IV; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Feb71, p. 29.
26. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Feb71, p. 12; MACV ComdHist,71, I, ch. 8, p. 29; 1stMarDiv msg, dtd 31Dec70, in 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 1-10Jan71; CGXXIV Corps, Daily Forecast of Operations, dtd 28Jan71, in III MAF Jnl File, 22-30Jan71.
27. XXIV Corps, 1st Semi-Annual Written Summary, CCP71, dtd 17July71, Box 9, RG 338 (72A7122) and BGen Charles A. Jackson, USA, Dep Sr Advisor, I Corps, memo to LtGen Sutherland, Subj: Territorial Artillery for I Corps/MR 1, dtd 9Jan71, RG 319 (319-74-051), both in FRC, Suitland, Md.; Acting Prov Sr Advisor, Quang Nam, Report to MACV for Period 1-31Dec71, for period ending 31Jan71, dtd 2Feb71, and for period ending 28Feb71, dtd 3Mar71, all in CMH Files; CGXXIV Corps msg to PSAs of Quang Nam and Quang Ngai, dtd 4May71, Box 25, Folder 26, RG 319 (72A6443), FRC, Suitland, Md.
28. Robertson Transcript, pp. 47-49.
29. For an optimistic assessment of the enemy situation, see FMFPac, MarOpsV, Nov70, p. 7, and Dec70, p. 12; Grinalds Debrief.
30. LtGen James W. Sutherland, USA ltr to MajGen Thomas M. Tarpley, USA, dtd 1Feb71, Box 6, Folder 1, RG 319 (319-74-051), FRC, Suitland, Md.
31. MACV ComdHist, 71, I, ch.4, p. 21, II, Anx E, pp. 15-17.

CHAPTER 11

MARINES IN OPERATION LAM SON 719

Unless otherwise noted, material in this chapter is drawn from: MACV ComdHist, 70, and ComdHist, 71; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Apr71; and III MAF ComdC. Also extensively relied upon for events in Lam Son 719 is XXIV Corps, Operation Lam Son 719 AAR, dtd 14May71, MACV Microfilm Records, Reel 158, MCHC, hereafter XXIV Corps Lam Son 719 AAR. Much material on the role of Marine aviation in the offensive is taken from 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, "A History of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, 1 November 1970 -14 April 1971," hereafter 1st MAW ComdHist70-71. The III MAF commander's view is in Robertson, Transcript.

The Preemptive Strike: Lam Son 719

1. XXIV Corps Lam Son 719 AAR; 1st MAW ComdHist70-71, pt. II, ch. 4, p. 4; MACV ComdHist, 71, II, Anx E, pp. 15-17.
2. Gen William C. Westmoreland, USA (Ret), *A Soldier Reports* (Garden City, N.Y., 1976), pp. 271-272.
3. This account of the plans for Lam Son 719 is based on MACV ComdHist, 71, II, Anx E, pp. 15-25, and XXIV Corps Lam Son 719 AAR.
4. Col Verle E. Ludwig, comments on draft ms, 14Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File).
5. Robertson Transcript, p. 59; 1st MAW ComdHist70-71, p. B-8; III MAF ComdC, Feb71, pp. 19-20; CGIIIMAF msg to CG1stMAW and CG1stMarDiv, dtd 6Feb71, Box 25, RG 319 (72A6443), FRC, Suitland, Md. On 21Jan71, XXIV Corps issued a cover plan aimed at deceiving the enemy as to the purpose of the concentrations of troops for Lam Son 719; see CGXXIVCorps msg to Subordinate Units, dtd 21Jan71, in III MAF Jnl File, 13-21Jan71.
6. Robertson Transcript, p. 43.
7. The following account of the Laotian offensive is based on: MACV ComdHist, 71, Anx E, passim.; LtGen James W. Sutherland, Jr., USA, Senior Officer Debriefing Report, Period 18Jun70-9 Jun71, Copy in MCHC, pp. 29-30, hereafter Sutherland Debrief; ComUSMACV, msg to CJCS, dtd 14Feb71; ComUSMACV msgs to CJCS and CincPac, dtd 16Feb71 and 1Mar71; Gen Weyand msg to Adm McCain, dtd 13Apr71, all in MACV Documents, FRC, Suitland, Md., Copies in MCHC; XXIV Corps Lam Son 719 AAR.
8. MajGen Nguyen Duy, *Lam Son 719* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1979); Col John G. Miller, comments on draft ms, 19Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter Miller Comments.
9. For summaries and comments on ARVN deficiencies, see: MACV ComdHist, 71, II Anx E, passim.; Lam Son 719 Working Papers and Notes, MACV Microfilm Records, Reel 100, MCHC; LtCol Robert R. Darron, intvw 3Jun76 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), pp. 41-45, hereafter Darron Transcript. See also XXIV Corps Lam Son AAR; MajGen Alan J. Armstrong intvw, 25Sept73, p. 31 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Armstrong Transcript; LtGen Marshall N. Carter, comments on draft ms, 28Mar83 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter Carter Comments.
10. LtGen Sutherland msg to Gen Abrams, dtd 18Mar71, MACV Documents, Suitland, Md., copy in MCHC is an example of the U.S. concern about the speed of the Vietnamese withdrawal.
11. The armored brigade losses are summarized in XXIV Corps Lam Son 719 AAR; for the artillery pieces abandoned, see MACV ComdHist, 71, II, Anx E, p. 43. See also Miller Comments.

Marine Fixed Wing Air Support and the ASRT

12. Robertson Transcript, pp. 59-62.
13. 1st MAW ComdHist70-71, pt. II, ch. 4, p. 6; 1st MAW ComdC, Feb71; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Feb71, p. 25. It should be noted that the sortie and bomb tonnage figures in the command chronology differ from those in the 1st MAW ComdHist, which are lower (for example 5508 sorties in the ComdHist to 534 in the ComdC). Throughout the accounts of Marine aviation in Lam Son 719, we have used the command history's figures where there is disagreement among the sources, as some apparently exclude missions in Laos that were not in support of the ARVN offensive.
14. 1st MAW ComdHist70-71, p. A-1; 1st MAW News Release No. 137-71, in 1st MAW ComdC, Mar71.
15. 1st MAW ComdHist70-71, pt. II, ch. 5, p. 6; 1st MAW ComdC, Mar71 and 1-14 Apr71; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, p. 28. For a summary of Air Force operations, see MACV ComdHist, 71, Anx E, pp. 39-42.
16. MACV ComdHist, 71, II, Anx E, p. 39.
17. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, pp. 57-58, Jan-Feb71, p. 25, Mar-Apr71, pp. 29-30; 1st MAW ComdHist 70-71, pt. II, ch. 4, pp. 20-21, ch. 5, p. 6; 1st MAW News Release No. 175-71, 1st MAW ComdC, Mar71.
18. XXIV Corps ORLL, period ending 30Apr71, dtd 17May71, copy in MCHC.

Marine Helicopters Over Laos

Additional sources for this section are: HMH-463 ComdC, Jan-Mar71; HML-367 ComdC, Jan-Mar71; and MajGen Alan J. Armstrong, debriefing at FMFPac, 29June71, Tape 5010 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Armstrong Debrief.

19. Darron Transcript, pp. 64-65; MACV ComdHist, 71, II, Anx E, p. 44.
20. Robertson Transcript, pp. 64-65.
21. 3d MAB News Release No. 6-71, dtd 25Apr71, 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71.
22. HMH-463 ComdC, Jan-Feb71; 1st MAW ComdHist70-71, pt. II, ch. 4, pp. 7-9, B-10 – B-12.
23. MACV ComdHist, 71, II, Anx E, p. 20; 1st MAW News Release No. 91-71, 1st MAW ComdC, Feb71; Darron Transcript, pp. 42-43.
24. Robertson Transcript, pp. 62-64; XXIV Corps Lam Son 719 AAR, Anx N, App 1.
25. XXIV Corps ORLL, period ending 30Apr71, dtd 17May71, p. 8, copy in MCHC.
26. 3d MAB News Release No. 6-71, dtd 25Apr71, in 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71; 1st MAW COC, msg to III MAF COC, dtd 26Feb71, in III MAF Journal & File, 19-28Feb71.
27. Armstrong Debrief; see also Armstrong Transcript, pp. 21-23, and Darron Transcript, pp. 50-52.
28. FMFPac, Citation for Distinguished Flying Cross for Capt Robert F. Wemheuer, in Hist&MusDiv Citation Files, 1971; 1st MAW News Release No. 141-71, in 1st MAW ComdC, Mar71.
29. FMFPac, Citations for Navy Commendation Medals for Capt Henry J. Cipolla and GySgt Ronald S. Severson, in Hist&MusDiv Citation Files, 1971; Darron Transcript, pp. 65-67.
30. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Feb71, pp. 22-23, 28-29; 3d MAB News Release No. 39-71, dtd 13May71 (delayed) in 3d MAB Jnl File, May71, describes a typical day of Cobra operations; FMFPac, Citation for Air Medal for Maj Malcolm T. Bird, and Citation for Air Medal for 1stLt Michael L. Bartlett, both in Hist&MusDiv Citation Files, 1971.
31. Armstrong Transcript, p. 12; HML-367 ComdC, Feb71; 1st MAW ComdHist70-71, p. A-1.
32. Quoted in 3d MAB News Release No. 6-71, dtd 25Apr71, 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71.
33. 3d MAB News Release No. 9-71, dtd 30Apr71, in 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30 Apr71.
34. HMH-463 ComdC, Mar71; XXIV Corps Lam Son 719 AAR, Anx N, App 1.
35. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, pp. 24-25; XXIV Corps Lam Son 719 AAR , Anx N, App 1; for comparative Army helicopter statistics, see MACV ComdHist, 71, II, Anx E, pp. 37-39.

Marine Trucks on Route 9

Additional sources for this section are: Co C, 11th MT Bn CAAR, dtd 24Feb71, in 11th MT Bn ComdC, Feb71, hereafter Co C CAAR.

36. CGIIIMAF msg to CGs of 1st MAW and 1stMarDiv, dtd 6Feb71, Box 25, RG 319 (72A6443), FRC, Suitland, Md.
37. Robertson Transcript, pp. 59-60.
38. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Feb71, p. 37; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Feb71, p. 27; Co C CAAR.
39. The following account of Co C's opetations is taken from Co C CAAR; and XXIV Corps Lam Son 719 AAR, Anx N, App 2.
40. Robertson Transcript, p. 43.
41. 1stMarDiv FragO 5-71, dtd 14Feb71, 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 9-16Feb71.
42. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Feb71, p. 21.
43. XXIV Corps Lam Son 719 AAR, Anx N.
44. Headquarters Bn, 1st MarDiv ComdCs, Feb-Mar71; Capt Ronald C. Hood III, intvw, tape 6345 (Oral HistColl, MCHC). See also Himmerich Comments.

Diversion Off Vinh

An additional source for this section is LtCol Jon R. Robson and Maj William J. Sambito, intvw, 28June76, Tape 6178 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Robson/Sambito Intvw.
45. CinCPac msg to ComUSMACV, dtd 31Dec70, in CinCPac Message Files, Navy History Division.
46. ComUSMACV msg to CGXXIV Corps, dtd 4Feb71, MACV Documents, FRC, Suitland, Md., copy in MCHC.
47. 31st MAU ComdC, Jan71, p. 2; BLT 3/9 ComdC, Feb71; Robson/Sambito Intvw.
48. 31st MAU ComdC, Feb71, p. 2.
49. 31st MAU, Proposed OPlan 1-71, dtd 6Feb71, tab F, 31st MAU ComdC, Feb71; BLT 3/9 OPlan 1-71, dtd 7Feb71, in 3/9 ComdC, Feb71.
50. 31st MAU ComdC, Feb71, pp. 3-4; CGXXIV Corps msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 7Feb71; CTG76.4/CTG 79.4 msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 7Feb71; CGIIIMAF msg to CG 1st MAW, dtd 7Feb71; all in III MAF Jnl File, 31Jan-8Feb71; Robson/Sambito Intvw.
51. Robson/Sambito Intvw; BLT 3/9 ComdC, Feb71.
52. The following account of the diversion is drawn from 31st MAU ComdC, Feb-Mar71; BLT 3/9 ComdC, Feb-Mar71; and Robson/Sambito Intvw. All quotations not otherwise cited are from the latter source.
53. Robson/Sambito Intvw.
54. Capt Tracy H. Wilder, Jr., USN, comments on draft ms, 14Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File)

Results of Lam Son 719

55. MACV ComdHist, 71, II, Anx E, p. 34; Gen Weyand msg to Adm McCain, dtd 13Apr71, MACV Documents, FRC, Suitland, Md., copy in MCHC.
56. MACV ComdHist, 71, II, Anx E, p. 45; see also pp. 33-35.
57. Sutherland Debrief, pp. 6-7.

CHAPTER 12

LAST OPERATIONS OF III MAF, JANUARY-MARCH 1971

Unless otherwise noted, material in this chapter is drawn from: FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Mar71; MACV ComdHist, 71; III MAF and 1stMarDiv ComdCs, Jan-Mar71. Army documents cited from Records Groups 319 and 338 are located in the Federal Records Center, Suitland, Md. Extensive use has been made of the Robertson Transcript.

Plans for the Army Takeover of Quang Nam

1. Col J. W. Haggerty, III, Debriefing at FMFPac, 15Oct70, Tape 4965 (Oral HistColl, MCHC.).
2. Robertson Transcript, pp. 70-71.
3. The following account of this conference is based on LtCol J. C. Love memo to Asst C/S G-3, 1stMarDiv, Subj: Turnover of Marine Responsibility/Property to U.S. Army, dtd 26Jan71, in 3d MAB Planning Notebook, 1stMarDiv Docs, hereafter cited as Love Memo.
4. For 196th Brigade operations in Antenna Valley, see CGXXIV Corps msg to III MAF, dtd 13Jan71, and CG23dInfDiv msg to XXIV Corps, dtd 14Jan71, both in III MAF Jnl File, 13-21Jan71.
5. Love Memo; Robertson Transcript, pp. 72-73.
6. CG1stMarDiv msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 4Feb71, III MAF Jnl File, 31Jan-8Feb71; CG1stMarDiv msg to Units of 1stMarDiv, dtd 8Feb71, 3d MAB Planning Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents.
7. Gen Abrams msg to LtGen Robertson and other Commanders, dtd 17Feb71, in Sutherland Message Files, U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH); MACV ComdHist, 71, Supplement, p. 9.
8. CG23dInf Div msg to CGXXIV Corps, dtd 18Feb71, in 23d Div Msg File, Box 1/2, 72A811, RG 338; CG23dInfDiv msg to XXIV Corps, dtd 12Mar71, III MAF Jnl File, 1-12Mar71; 23dInfDiv FragO 14-71, dtd 21Mar71, III MAF Jnl File, 13-25Mar71; 196th Inf Bde, Admin/Logistics Plan 1-71 (Dominion Run), related to OPlan 4-71, dtd 21Mar71, Box 1/2, 72A811, RG 338.
9. Robertson Transcript, pp. 70-71.
10. CG23dInfDiv, LOI No. 12, Subj: Repositioning of the 196th Infantry Brigade, dtd 24Mar71, Box 9, 72A5711, RG 319; Robertson Transcript, pp. 70-71.

Operations in Quang Nam, January-February 1971

All award citations are from Microfilm Citation Files, RefSec, MCHC, hereafter Microfilm Citation Files.

11. III MAF ComdC, Jan71, pp. 16-17; Col E. A. Timmes, debriefing at FMFPac, 14Dec70, Tape 4980 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Timmes Debrief.
12. Timmes Debrief.
13. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Feb71, p. 14; XXIV Corps 1st Semi-Annual Written Summary, CCP71, dtd 17Jul71, Box 9, 72A7122, RG 338; III MAF ComdC, Feb71, pp. 8, 13-14; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jan and Feb71; CG1stMarDiv msg to 1stMarDiv, dtd 13Jan71, 1stMarDiv FragO 1-71, dtd 13Jan71, both in 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 11-20Jan71; Bronze Star Citations for SSgt Jack D. Flannery, MGySgt George E. Whitehurst, SSgt Edward S. Fugier, Sgt James A. Roy, and Cpl Larry R. Favreau, 1971, Microfilm Citation Files.
14. III MAF ComdC, Feb71, pp. 13-14.
15. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Feb71, pp. 4-5, 13-14; Senior Advisor, 1st Task Force Operations Summary, dtd 3Feb71, III MAF Jnl File, 31Jan-8Feb71, gives ARVN disposition on a typical day.
16. MACV ComdHist71, I, ch. 4, p. 21.
17. CG1stMarDiv msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 5Jan71, 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 1-10Jan71; CG1stMarDiv msg to 1stMarDiv, dtd 15Mar71, 2/1 ComdC, Mar71; 1/1 ComdC, Jan71, II-B, p. 1, II-C, p. 3.
18. 1st Mar ComdC, Jan-Feb71; 1/1, 2/2, and 3/1 ComdCs, Jan-Feb71.

19. 1st Mar FragO 001-71, dtd 3Jan71, in 2/1 ComdC, Jan71.
20. 1st Mar ComdC, Jan71, sec II-C, p. 5, Feb71, sec II-B, pp. 1-2.
21. 1st Mar FragO 002-71, dtd 13Jan71, 1st Mar ComdC, Jan71; 1st Mar FragO 003-71, dtd 8Feb71, and FragO 004-71, dtd 22Feb71, Ibid., Feb71; 1stMarDiv FragO 6-71, dtd 7Feb71, 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 1-8Feb71.
22. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Feb71, p. 6; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jan71, pp. 19-20, 22; 1st Mar ComdC, Jan71, sec II-B, pp. 1-3, sec II-C, pp. 1-4; 1/1 FragO 03-71, n.d., in 1/1 ComdC, Jan71, see also pt. III, pp. 1-3; 3/1 ComdC, Jan71, sec II-C, p. 1; 1/11 ComdC, Jan71, p. 9.
23. 1stMarDiv FragO 2-71, dtd 20Jan71; 1stMarDiv msg to 1st and 11th Mar, 1st Recon Bn, dtd 10Feb71; both in 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 11-20Jan71 and 9-16Feb71; 1/11 ComdC, Jan-Feb71; 1st Recon Bn ComdC, Jan-Feb71, 3d 8-Inch Howitzer Battery (SP) ComdC, Jan71.
24. 1stMarDiv FragO 3-71, dtd 29Jan71, 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 21-31Jan71; 1st Mar ComdC, Feb71; 3/1 ComdC, Feb71; Bronze Star Citation for LCpl Paul Barkley and Supporting Documents, Reel 76, Microfilm Citation Files.
25. 5th Mar ComdC, Jan-Feb71; 1/5, 2/5, 3/5 ComdCs, Jan-Feb71.
26. 1stMarDiv msg to 5th Mar, dtd 6Jan71, 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 1-10Jan71; 1/5 ComdC, Jan71.
27. CG 1stMarDiv msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 15Jan71, 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 11-20Jan71; 5th Mar ComdC, Feb71; 2/5 and 3/5 ComdCs, Jan-Feb71; 1/11 ComdC, Feb71.
28. 3/5 Forward CP Journal, 1-31Jan71, in 3/5 ComdC, Jan71.
29. 2/5 ComdC, Jan71, pp. 4, 14-20.
30. CG1stMarDiv msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 15Jan71, 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 11-20Jan71; casualty figures are taken from III MAF ComdC, Jan-Feb71.
31. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jan71, p. 23; HML-367 ComdC, Jan-Feb71.
32. FMFPac, MarOpV, Jan-Feb71, pp. 1-2, 8-9; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jan71, pp. 18-23; 5th Mar CUPP Progress Report, Jan71, dtd 4Feb71, in 2/5 ComdC, Jan71; CORDS Quang Nam PSA Report for period ending 31Jan71, dtd 2Feb71, CMH Files, describes the South Vietnamese pacification campaign.
33. 5th Mar ComdC, Feb71, p. 2; 2/5 ComdC, Jan71, p. 11.
34. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Feb71, p. 22; 5th Mar CUPP Progress Report, Feb71, dtd 2Mar71, in 2/5 ComdC, Feb71.
35. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jan-Feb71; 5th Mar ComdC, Feb71, p. 8.
36. FMFPac, MarOpV, Jan-Feb71, p. 1.

Keystone Robin Charlie Begins

37. FMFPac, MarOpV, Jan-Feb71, p. 2, 32; III MAF ComdC, Feb71, pp. 17, 19, 22; MAG-11 ComdC, Feb71; 1st MAW ComdHist70-71, pt. II, ch. 4, pp. 2-3, App B, pp. 7-12; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Feb71, p. 21.
38. FMFPac, MarOpV, Jan-Feb71, pp. 31-32, Mar-Apr71, pp. 29, 33-34; ComUSMACV msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 24Feb71, CG1stMAW msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 26Feb71, in III MAF Jnl File, 19-28 Feb71.
39. 1stMarDiv FragO 4-71, dtd 8Feb71, 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 1-8Feb71; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Feb71, p. 25; 3/5 ComdC, Feb71.
40. 11th Mar ComdC, Feb71, pt. II; 1/11 ComdC, Feb71; 1st Mar ComdC, Feb71, sec II-C, pp. 1-2; CGXXIV Corps msg to CGIII MAF, dtd 15Feb71, III MAF Jnl File, 9-18Feb71; CG1stMarDiv msg to 11th Mar, dtd 16Feb71, 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 9-16Feb71.
41. CG1stMarDiv msg to CGXXIV Corps, dtd 16Feb71, III MAF Jnl File, 9-18Feb71, pp. 5, 12-13.
42. CG1stMarDiv msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 23Feb71; CG1stMarDiv msg to 1st Mar, 1/5, and 11th Mar, dtd 18Mar71, 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 17-28Feb71 and 15-31Mar71; 1stMar msg to CG1stMarDiv, dtd 20Feb71, 3d MAB Planning Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents; 1stMarDiv OpO 1-71, dtd 28Feb71, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Mar71, tab B-14, also p. 21; 2/5 ComdC, 1-22Mar71.
43. 1st Mar FragO 005-71, dtd 1Mar71, 1st Mar ComdC, Mar71; 1/5 ComdC, Feb-Mar71; CG 1stMarDiv msgs to 1st Mar, dtd 10 and 15Mar71, 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 1-14Mar71, 15-31Mar71.
44. 1/11 ComdC, Mar71.
45. 1/5 ComdC, Mar71, pt. III; 1st Recon Bn, ComdC, Mar71.
46. 1st Mar FragO 006-71, dtd 19Mar71, 1st Mar ComdC, Mar71; 1/1, 2/1, 3/1 ComdCs, Mar71.
47. 1/11 ComdC, Mar71.
48. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Mar71, pp. 20-21; 11th Mar ComdC, Mar71, pt. II; 5th Mar ComdC, Mar71, 26Mar-13Apr71; MAG-11 ComdC, Mar71, p. 4; MACG-18 ComdC, Mar71, p. 4; 1st MAW ComdHist 70-71, II, ch. 5, pp. 2-3, App B; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, p. 5.
49. 1/1, 2/1, 3/1 ComdCs, Mar71; 1st Recon Bn ComdC, Mar71.
50. Grinalds Transcript, pp. 23-25.
51. Ibid.
52. CG1stMarDiv msg to 1st Mar, dtd 27Mar71, 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 15-31Mar71; 1st Mar msg to 1/1, 2/1, and 3/1, dtd 27Mar71, in 3/1 ComdC, Mar71.
53. 1stMarDiv Change 2 to 1stMarDiv FragO 61-70, dtd 28Mar71, 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 15-31Mar71; FMFPac, MarOpV, Mar-Apr71, p. 7.

The Pacification Effort Diminishes

54. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Feb71, p. 9; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Feb71, p. 22; CG1stMarDiv msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 11Feb71, and msg to 1st Mar, dtd 13Feb71, CG 1stMarDiv msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 18Mar71, 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 6-16Feb71, 15-31Mar71; 1/1 ComdC, Mar71, pt. III, p. 2; msg to 3/1, dtd 17Feb71, in 3/1 ComdC, Feb71.
55. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Mar71, p. 21; 5th Mar ComdC, Feb71, p. 3; 5th Mar CUPP Progress Report, 1-31Mar71, dtd 9Mar71, in 2/5 ComdC, 1-22Mar71.
56. 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71, p. 17; CG1stMarDiv msg to 5th Mar, dtd 13Mar71, 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 15-31Mar71.
57. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Feb71, pp. 11; 2d CAG ComdC, Jan-Mar71.
58. CORDS Quang Nam PSA, Report for period ending 31Mar71, dtd 2Apr71, CMH Files; 2d CAG ComdC, Mar71.
59. LtCol John J. Tolnay, debriefing at FMFPac, 19May71, Tape 5009 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Tolnay Debrief; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, p. 10.
60. CGIIIMAF msg to CMC, dtd 5Mar71, Folder 24, Box 25, 72A6443, RG 319.
61. Tolnay Debrief.
62. 2d CAG ComdC, Feb71; for civic action details, see III MAF, 1stMarDiv, and 1st MAW ComdCs, Jan-Mar71, and ComdCs for subordinate units for the same period.
63. CORDS Quang Nam PSA, Report for period ending 31Mar71, dtd 2Apr71, CMH Files; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jan71, p. 29, Feb71, p. 28, Mar71, p. 27.
64. 3d MAB Fact Sheet, Subj: Marine Corps Reserve Civic Action Fund for Vietnam, dtd May71, tab 18 in 3d MAB Fact Sheets, May71.
65. CORDS Quang Nam PSA, Report for period ending 28Feb71, dtd 3Mar71, CMH Files.
66. Robertson Transcript, pp. 83-84, MajGen Alan J. Armstrong, debriefing at FMFPac, 29Jun71, Tape 5010 (Oral HistColl, MCHC); BGen Edwin H. Simmons, transcript of orientation talk to new lieu-

tenants in 1stMarDiv, ca. early 71 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), p. 45; *Sea Tiger*, 15Jan71, p. 3; for typical traffic incidents, see 1st MP Bn ComdCs, 1970-1971; an unusually serious Marine-ARVN confrontation is reported in CGIIIMAF msg to CMC, dtd 27Feb71, Folder 24, Box 25, RG 319 (71A6443).

67. CGIIIMAF msg to CGXXIV Corps, dtd 6Mar71, Folder 24, Box 25, 72A6443, RG 319; Robertson Transcript, p. 61.

68. BGen Edwin H. Simmons memo to CG, FMFPac, Subj: Debriefing, Vietnam Service, 15Jun70-24May71, 1stMarDivDocuments.

69. Robertson Transcript, pp. 83-84.

The Enemy Grows Bolder

70. III MAF ComdC, Jan71, pp. 17-18, Feb71, pp. 14-15, Mar71, pp. 16-17; the disarming of the PSDF is in 5th Mar ComdC, Jan71, p. 3.

71. 1st Mar ComdC, Jan71, sec II-B, p. 1; Spot Report, dtd 16Jan71, in 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 11-20Jan71; III MAF ComdC, Feb71, pp. 14-15. Innumerable other instances of terrorism can be found in III MAF, 1stMarDiv, and subordinate unit ComdCs.

72. 2/1 S-2 Jnl, 27Mar71, in 2/1 ComdC, Mar71; see also Ibid., sec III-A, p. 1; 2/1 Spot Report, dtd 4Mar71, III MAF Jnl File, 1-12Mar71.

73. 1st Mar msg to 1stMarDiv, dtd 16Mar71, 1st Mar ComdC, Mar71; 1stMarDiv msg to Subordinate Units, dtd 17Mar71, 2/1 ComdC, Mar71; CG1stMarDiv msg to 1stMarDiv, dtd 27Mar71, 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 15-31Mar71; III MAF ComdC, Mar71, pp. 14, 16; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Mar71, pp. 15-16; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, p. 17.

74. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, pp. 16-18; III MAF ComdC, Mar71, p. 11; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Mar71, pp. 17-18; 1st Mar ComdC, Mar71, sec II-B, p. 1.

75. Unless otherwise noted, the following account of the battle of Duc Duc and the role of Marine helicopters in it is based on: XXIV Corps ORLL, period ending 30Apr71, copy in MCHC; CG3dMAB msg to CGFMFPac, dtd 22Apr71, in Narrative Notes 1971 Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents; III MAF ComdC, Mar71, pp. 15-16; CORDS Quang Nam PSA Report for period ending 31Mar71, dtd 2Apr71, CMH Files; HML-367 ComdC, Mar71; Documents Supporting Distinguished Flying Cross Citations for SSgt Karl S. Brooks and Sgt Donald B. Jelonek, Reel 88, Microfilm Citation Files; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71.

76. HML-367 ComdC, Mar71.

77. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, pp. 12-13; 2d CAG ComdC, Mar71.

78. 3/1 ComdC, Mar71, pt. III-A, p. 11; Bronze Star Citation for 1st Lieutenant Steven A. Kux, Reel 103, Microfilm Citation Files.

79. III MAF ComdC, 1-14Apr71, pp. 12-13; 1stMarDiv ComdC, 1-14Apr71, pp. 16-17; 1st Mar ComdC, 1-14Apr71, sec II-B, p. 1.

80. 3d MAB CG's Command Information Notebook, Apr71, p. G-2-6, 1stMarDiv Documents; 1stMarDiv ComdC, 1-14Apr71, pp. 14-15.

81. III MAF ComdC, 1-14Apr71, p. 12.

CHAPTER 13

THE MARINES LEAVE DA NANG

Operations in Southern Quang Nam, 1-13 April 1971

Unless otherwise noted, material in this chapter is taken from MACV ComdHist, 71; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, May-Jun71; III MAF ComdC, 1-14Apr71; and 1stMarDiv ComdC, 1-14Apr71. All citations to numbered Record Groups (RGs) refer to records in the Federal Records Center, Suitland, Md., unless otherwise indicated. Frequent reference is made to 196th Bde situation reports Box 3/4, RG 338 (73A1545), hereafter cited as 196th Bde SitRep with dates(s).

1. 1/1 ComdC, 1-13Apr71; 2/1 ComdC, 1-14Apr71; 3/1 ComdC, 1-14Apr71.

2. 1stMarDiv ComdC, 1-14Apr71, p. 17.

3. BGen Edwin H. Simmons, USMC (Ret.), conversation with author, 25Aug76.

4. III MAF FragO 8-71, dtd 7Apr71, in III MAF Jnl File, 7-14Apr71; 1st Mar FragO 007-71, dtd 7Apr71, in 1st Mar ComdC, 1-14Apr71.

5. MajGen Roy E. Moss, comments on draft ms, 27Jun83 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter Moss Comments.

6. 1st MAW ComdHist 70-71, ch. III, p. 3.

7. Events of this operation can be followed in detail in 2/1 S-2 Operational Journal, Operation Scott Orchard, 8-11Apr71, in 2/1 ComdC, 1-14Apr71. This account is also based on: FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, pp. 7-8; III MAF ComdC, 1-14Apr71, p. 8; 1st Mar ComdC, 1-14Apr71; 1/11 ComdC, 1-14Apr71; HML-367 ComdC, 1-14Apr71; Co. A, 1st Recon Bn, ComdC, 1-14Apr71, Patrol Reports for Teams Stone Pit, Achilles Roadtest, Lynch Law, and Ice Bound.

8. CG1stMarDiv msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 10Apr71, and msg to 1st Mar, dtd 14Apr71, in 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 1-14Apr71; 1st Mar ComdC, 1-14Apr71, pt. II-C, pp. 1-2; 3/1 ComdC, 1-14Apr71, pt. II; 1/11 ComdC, 1-14Apr71, pt. II; CG23dInfDiv msg to Subordinate Commands dtd 10Apr71, Box 25, Folder 25, RG 319 (72A 6443); 196th Bde SitReps, 5-6Apr71, 11-12Apr71, 12-13Apr71; CGUSARV msg to II FForceV and CGXXIV Corps, dtd 30Mar71, Box 25, Folder 24, RG 319 (72A 6443).

Activation and Operations of the 3d Marine Amphibious Brigade

This section draws heavily on: 3d MAB Planning Notebook in 1stMarDiv Documents, hereafter cited as 3d MAB Notebook; and Armstrong Debrief.

9. LtGen Jones, msg to LtGen Robertson, info MajGen Wilson, dtd 5Feb71, HQMC Message Files.

10. BGen Edwin H. Simmons memo to C/S III MAF, Subj: 3d MAB Planning Staff, dtd 24Feb71, 3d MAB Notebook; see also LtCol J. C. Love memo to G-3, 1stMarDiv, Subj: Activation of 3d MAB Hq, dtd 3Feb71 3d MAB Notebook.

11. CGIIIMAF msg, dtd 27Feb71, quoted in C/S, 3d MAB, Memo for the Record, Subj: Weekly Activities Summary, dtd 8Mar71; C/S 3d MAB, Memo for the Record, Subj: III MAF Coordinating Conference, dtd 6Mar71; C/S 3d MAB, Memo for the Record, Subj: 3d MAB Planning Staff Meeting of 10Mar71, dtd 11Mar71; C/S 3d MAB, Memo for the Record, Subj: Meeting with Headquarters Commandants of III MAF, 1stMarDiv, and 3d MAB, dtd 11Mar71; LtCol J. C. Love memo to G-3, 1stMarDiv, Subj: 1st MAW Integration into 3d MAB, dtd 5Feb71; all these documents are in 3d MAB Notebook.

12. BGen Edwin H. Simmons, USMC (Ret.), conversation with author, 25Aug76; CGFMFPac msg, dtd 15Mar71, quoted in C/S 3d MAB memo to CG III MAF, Subj: Weekly Activities Summary, dtd 22Mar71, 3d MAB Notebook.

13. The Simmons quotation is from BGen Edwin H. Simmons memo to CGFMFPac, Subj: Debriefing, Vietnam Service

5Jun70-24May71, dtd 24May71, 1stMarDiv Documents. Armstrong's remarks are from Armstrong Debrief. Planning Document for Building the MAB Headquarters, dtd 24Jul70; 1stMarDiv Artillery Officer memo to C/S, 1stMarDiv, Subj: Div FSCC/MAB FSCC, dtd 14Mar71; both in 3d MAB Notebook; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, pp. 2-3.

14. 3d MAB, Proposed Increment VII Standdown and Departure Schedule, dtd 22Mar71, 3d MAB Notebook.

15. C/S 3d MAB, Memo for the Record, Subj: 3d MAB Staff Meeting, dtd 26Mar71, Ibid; III MAF ComdC, 1-14Apr71, p. 17; Capt Ronald C. Hood III, intvw, 3Mar78, Tape 6345, (Oral HistColl, MCHC); Himmerich Comments.

16. MACV ComdHist, 71, Supplement, pp. 10-11; 1stMarDiv ComdC, 1-14Apr71, p. 19; 1st Mar FragO 008-71, dtd 12Apr71, in 1st Mar ComdC, 1-14Apr71, also Ibid., pt. II; 1/1 ComdC, 14-30Apr71, pt. 11; 1/11 ComdC, 1-14Apr71, pt. II, 2d CAG ComdC, 1-14Apr71.

17. 2/1 FragO 009-71, dtd 12Apr71, in 2/1 ComdC, 1-14Apr71; see also Ibid., pts. II and III.

18. Robertson is quoted in *Sea Tiger*, 14Apr71; III MAF ComdC, 1-14Apr71, p. 6; 1stMarDiv ComdC, 1-14Apr71, p. 19; 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71, p. 21.

19. Col Don H. Blanchard, comments on draft ms, 2Jun83 (Vietnam Comment File).

20. 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71, p. 4; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, pp. 3, 20, 32-33.

21. 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71, p. 17; MAG-11 ComdC, 16-30Apr71, p. 4; FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-Jun71, p. 19.

22. 1st Mar ComdC, 14-30Apr71, pt. II; 2/1 ComdC, 15-30Apr71; 3/1 ComdC, 15-30Apr71, pt. II; 2d CAG ComdC, 14-30Apr71; Co A, 1st Recon Bn ComdC, 14-30Apr71, p. 3.

23. 1/11 ComdC, 14-30Apr71, pt. II and S-3 Journal; 1st Mar ComdC, 14-30Apr71, pt. II, gives the figures on rounds fired and the details of the artillery bombardment of La Bong.

24. Senior Advisor, 1st Task Force, msg to Dep Sr Advisor, ICorps/MR 1, dtd 18Apr71, Box 25, Folder 25, RG 319 (72A 6443); FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, p. 16.

25. 3d MAB FragO 07-71, dtd 22Apr71, in 3d MAB Jnl File, 14-30Apr71; 3d MAB Fact Sheet, Subj: Operations Review for ACMC Visit, dtd 30Apr71, in Narrative Notes 1971 Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents; 1/1 ComdC, 1-13Apr71, pt. II; 2/1 ComdC, 15-30Apr71, pt. III; 3/1 ComdC, 15-30Apr71, pt. II; CG23dInfDiv msg to CGXXIV Corps, dtd 23Apr71, in 23d Div Message File 1971, Box 1/2, RG 338 (72A811).

26. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, p. 44; 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71, p. 19.

27. The quotation is from 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71, pp. 10-11, see also pp. 13-14; 1st Mar ComdC, 14-30Apr71, pt. II; XXIV Corps ORLL, period ending 30Apr71, dtd 17May71; 23d Div ORLL, period ending 15Oct71, dtd 1Nov71, copies in MCHC.

28. 3/1 ComdC, 15-30Apr71, pt. II.

29. 196th Bde SitRep, 29-30Apr71.

30. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Apr71, p. 6.

31. These figures are drawn from 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71, pp. 4, 13-16, 42; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr, p. 6.

The End of Keystone Robin Charlie

32. LtCol Robert E. Wehrle, comments on draft ms, 9May83 (Vietnam Comment File).

33. MACV ComdHist, 71, II, Anx F, App 1, pp. 6-7; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, pp. 33-36; 1stMarDiv ComdC, 1-14Apr71, p. 18; 1/5 ComdC, 1-15Apr71, pt. II; MACG-18 ComdC, 1-14Apr71, pt. II; MWHG-1 ComdC, 1-14Apr71, p. 3, and 15Apr-30Jun71, pp. 3-4.

34. The Nixon quotation and description of the ceremony is in 1stMarDiv News Release No. 591-71, in 1stMarDiv ComdC, 14Apr-30Jun71; also in Ibid., see p. 16 and 1stMarDiv, Division Bulletin No. 5060, dtd 28Apr71; *New York Times*, 1May71.

35. 1stMarDiv News Release No. 592-71, dtd 30Apr71, in 1stMarDiv ComdC, 14-30Apr71, also Ibid., p.12.

Keystone Oriole Alpha: The Final Stand-Down

36. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, p. 5, MayJun71, pp. 2, 4; 1st Mar FragO 009-71, dtd 26Apr71, in 1st Mar ComdC, 14-30Apr71; 1st Mar ComdC, 1-9May71, pt. II; 3/1 ComdC, 1-9May71, pt. II; 1/11 ComdC, 1-12May71, pt. III and S-3 Journal; CG 3d MAB msg to 1st Mar, dtd 24Apr71, 3d MAB Jnl File, 14-30Apr71; 2d CAG ComdC, 1-11May71; MAG-16 ComdC, May71, pt. II.

37. 196th Bde SitRep, 30Apr-1May71.

38. FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-Jun71, pp. 1-2; 3d MAB ComdC, May71, pp. 14, 31; 3d MAB Fact Sheet, Subj: Operations Review for ACMC Visit, dtd 30Apr71, in Narrative Notes 1971 Notebook, 1stMarDivDocuments; 2/1 ComdC, May71.

39. The fight at Dai Loc is described in 3d MAB Journal Entry, dtd 2May71, in 3d MAB Jnl File, May71, and in Quang Nam Prov Sr Advisor, Report for period ending 31May71, dtd 2Jun71, CMH Files; casualty statistics for the battles in Dai Loc District are in FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-Jun71, pp. 6-7; Grinalds Debrief and Tolnay Debrief contain optimistic assessments of RF/PF performance.

40. 3d MAB ComdC, May71, p. 12; 3d MAB Jnl File, May71.

41. Moss Comments.

42. 3d MAB FragO 02-71, dtd 4May71, in 3d MAB Jnl Files, May71; 3d MAB ComdC, May71, pp. 12-13; 3d MAB Historical Summary, dtd 7May71, Narrative Notes 1971 Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents, hereafter 3d MAB HistSum, 7May71; FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-Jun71, pp. 4-5, 7; 1/11 ComdC, 1-12May71, p. 2-2; 2d CAG ComdC, 1-11May71; 1st MP Bn ComdC, May71, pp. 4-5.

43. 3d MAB HistSum, 7May71.

44. Ibid.

45. 196th Bde SitRep, 7-8May71; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, p. 3.

46. 1st Mar ComdC, 10May-30Jun71, pt. II; 3/1 ComdC, 9 May-30Jun71, pt. II; for a brief summary of the 1st Marines' Vietnam service, See FMFPac MarOps, May-Jun71, pp. 3-4.

47. 1/11 ComdC, 1-12May71, S-3 Journal, and 13May-30Jun71, pt. III.

48. Robertson Transcript, p. 83; 1st Recon Bn ComdC, 1-13May71, pt. III; 3d MAB ComdC, May71, p. 15.

49. CG3d MAB msg to CGFMFPac, dtd 14May71, in 3d MAB Jnl File, May71; 3d MAB Fact Sheet, Subj: Operation Review, ACMC visit, dtd 30Apr71, in Narrative Notes 1971 Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents.

50. The quotation is from 3d MAB ComdC, May71, p. 36; see also Ibid., 14-30Apr71, p. 24. The deactivation of 2d CAG is described in 2d CAG ComdC, 1-11May71, and Tolnay Debrief. For the ceremony at the Quang Tri Child Care Center, see 3d MAB ComdC, May71, p. 23, and 3d MAB Supplemental Data Sheet D, Subj: Child Care Center, ca. May71, Narrative Notes 1971 Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents.

51. FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-Jun71, pp. 11-17; MAG-11 ComdC, May71, p. 5; MAG-16 ComdC, May71, pt. II.
52. 2/1 ComdC, May71, pt. III, Jun71, pt. III; 1/11 ComdC, 13May-30Jun71, pt III.
53. The quotation is from MajGen Armstrong msg to LtGen Jones, dtd 6Jun71, HQMC Message Files. FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-Jun71, pp. 7-9, 52-53; 3d MAB ComdC, Jun71, pp. 6, 17; 1st MP Bn ComdC, Jun71, pp. 8-9; MAG-16 ComdC, Jun71, pt. II.
54. MajGen Armstrong msg to LtGen Jones, dtd 6Jun71, HQMC Message Files.
55. FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-Jun71, pp. 57-60, contains a schedule of ship departures and the final figures on men and supplies redeployed.
56. Armstrong Debrief. For the plans, see Armstrong msg to LtGen Jones, dtd 31May71, HQMC Message Files.
57. Armstrong Debrief.
58. Ibid.
59. FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-Jun71, pp. 59-60; 3d MAB ComdC, Jun71, p. 6.
60. Himmerich Comments.

Quang Nam after the Marines Left

Unless otherwise indicated, material in this section is drawn from 196th Infantry Brigade, CAAR, Operation Caroline Hill, dtd 20Jul71, Box 39, RG 319 (319-73-51), hereafter cited as Caroline Hill CAAR.

61. Caroline Hill CAAR; 23d Inf Div FragO 14-71, dtd 21May71, in III MAF Jnl File, 13-15Mar71; Col William S. Hathaway, USA, transcript of intvw by 3d Military History Detachment, U.S. Army (Interview No. VNIT 890, CMH), p. 4.
62. MACV ComdHist, 71, II, Anx H, p. 13; XXIV Corps, 1st Semi-Annual Written Summary, CCP71, dtd 17Jul71, Box 9, RG 338 (72A7712); 23d Inf Div ORLL, period ending 15Oct71, dtd 1Nov71 (Copy in MCHC), pp. 3-4, 6; Caroline Hill CAAR; Quang Nam Senior Advisor, Report for period ending 31May71, dtd 2Jun71, in CMH Files.
63. MACV ComdHist, 71, I, ch. 4, pp.21-2; 3d MAB ComdC, May71, p.13; Lam's concern is expressed in CGICorps msg to Quang Nam Province Chief, dtd 15May71, repeated in CGXXIV Corps msg to CG23dInfDiv, dtd 19May71, Box 9, Folder 37, RG 319 (72A5711).
64. LtGen James W. Sutherland, Jr., USA, Senior Officer Debriefing Report, period 18Jun70-9Jun71, dtd 31Aug71 (copy in MCHC).
65. ComUSMACV msg to CinCPac, info CGXXIV Corps, dtd 5Aug71, Box 9, Folder 39, RG 319 (72A5711).
66. XXIV Corps, 2d Semi-Annual Written Summary, CCP71, dtd 23Jan72, Box 9, RG 338 (72A7122); Da Nang City Advisor, Report for period ending 31Dec71, dtd 3Jan72, in CMH Files.

CHAPTER 14

CONTINUING OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS, 1970-1971

Unless otherwise noted, material in this chapter is drawn from FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Dec70, Jan-June71; and 1stMarDiv Comd C, Jan-Dec70, Jan-Apr71.

Protecting the Da Nang Vital Area

Additional sources for this section are: 1st MP Bn Fact Sheet, Subj: Defense of the Da Nang Vital Area, dtd 12Aug70, hereafter cited as 1st MP Bn Fact Sheet, and 3d MP Bn, Briefing for BGen Simmons, dtd 12Aug70, hereafter 3d MP Bn Briefing, both in Narrative Notes 1970 Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents. Unless otherwise noted, all material is drawn from 1st MP Bn ComdC, Jan-Dec70 and Jan-Jun71 and 3d MP Bn ComdC, Jan-Jun70.

1. Quoted in Chester L. Cooper, Judith E. Corson, Laurence J. Legere, David E. Lockwood, and Donald M. Weller, *The American Experience with Pacification in Vietnam*, 3 vols. (Arlington, Va.: Institute for Defense Analyses, 1972), 2, 247-248, 253. For social and economic problems in the DVA, see also CORDS Da Nang City Advisor Reports, Jan-Dec70 and Jan-Jun71, in CMH Files.
2. Organization Chart in CGIIIMAF Folder, Vietnam, vol. 2, Socio-Political, 1970, tab I, III MAF Mixed Topics File; LtGen Herman Nickerson, Debriefing at FMFPac, 17Mar70, Tape 6000 (Oral Hist-Coll, MCHC).
3. 1st MP Bn Fact Sheet, pp. 1-3, tab C-1; 1st MAW OpOrder 303-YR, dtd 1Jan70, Anx E (Ground Defense). For background on Marine base defense methods and the arrival of the 1st MP Bn, see FMFPac, MarOpsV, Feb66, pp. 41-42, and Jun66, p. 33.
4. 3d MP Bn ComdC, Jan70; 3d MP Bn Briefing.
5. 3d MP Bn ComdC, Jun70, p. 3, 23Aug-15Oct70; 1st MP Bn ComdC, Aug70, p. 2; 3d MP Bn Briefing; 1st MP Bn Fact Sheet, pp. 3-4, tabs G and H.
6. 1st MP Bn Fact Sheet, tab F-1; see also tab D-1; 1st MP Bn ComdC, Jul70, pp. 4-5.
7. 1st MP Bn ComdC, Mar71, p. 4.
8. Dulacki intvw, pp. 83-84.
9. Dulacki Comments.
10. 1st MP Bn ComdC, May70, p. 10, Jul70, p.10, Oct70, pp. 9-11.
11. BGen Stewart C. Meyer, USA, Acting C/S XXIV Corps, ltr to CO, 366th Tactical Fighter Wing, dtd 3Jul71 (319 74 051), RG 319, 23d Inf Div OpO 4-71, in 23d Div Op Planning Files 71 (72A753), RG 338, both in FRC, Suitland, Md.

Base Defense

12. This description of the An Hoa defense sysem is taken from 5th Mar OpO 1-70 (Defense of An Hoa Combat Base), dtd 26 Apr70, in 5th Mar ComdC, Apr70.
13. 5th Mar OpO 4-70 (Defense of Baldy Combat Base), dtd 25Oct70, in 5th Mar ComdC, Oct70.
14. 1/5 OpO 1-71, dtd 9Jan71; 1/5 FragO 1-71, dtd 4Jan71; 1/5 FragO 2-71, dtd 11Jan71; all in 1/5 ComdC, Jan71.
15. For the Keystone Robin Charlie troop redeployments, see 2/1 FragO 4-71, dtd 21Mar71, in 2/1 ComdC, Mar71.
16. For rocket and mortar fire statistics, see 1stMarDiv, Command Information Summary, Dec70, dtd 21Jan71, in Narrative Notes 70 Notebook, and 1stMarDiv Command Information Summary, Apr71, dtd 31Apr71, in Command Information Notebook, Apr71, both in 1stMarDiv Documents.

Intelligence: Collection and Use

Additional sources for this section are: III MAF ComdC, Jan-Dec70, Jan-Apr71; 1st MAW ComdC, Jan-Dec70, Jan-Apr71; Defense

Communications Planning Group Liaison Office No. 1, Briefing, Subj: Duffel Bag in 10 Minutes, dtd Feb69, in Narrative Notes 69 Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents, hereafter cited as Duffel Bag Briefing; 1stMarDiv, Sensor Program Briefing, dtd 12Dec70, in Narrative Notes 70 Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents, hereafter cited as 1stMarDiv Sensor Briefing; and BGen Edwin H. Simmons memo to CGFMFPac, Subj: Debriefing, Vietnam Service, 15Jun70-24May71, 1stMarDiv Documents, hereafter cited as Simmons Debrief. Extensive use has been made of the following tapes and transcripts, all in the Oral History Collection, History and Museums Division: Nickerson Transcript; Col Edward W. Dzialo, debriefing at FMFPac, 2July70, Tape 4888, hereafter Dzialo Debrief; Col John W. Canton, debriefing at FMFPac, 22Dec69, Tape 4737, hereafter Canton Debrief; Col John W. Haggerty III, debriefing at FMFPac, 15Oct70, Tape 4965, hereafter Haggerty Debrief; Col Edward A. Timmes, debriefing at FMFPac, 14Sept70, Tape 4980, hereafter Timmes Debrief; LtCol Charles M. Mosher, debriefing at FMFPac, 17Sept70, Tape 4959, hereafter Mosher Debrief; Grinalds Debrief; and Grinalds Transcript.

17. Dulacki intvw, pp. 11-13.
18. Dulacki Comments.
19. Simmons Debrief.
20. VMO-2 ComdC, Jan-Dec70; Simmons Debrief.
21. The quotations are from Dzialo Debrief. 1st MAW G-2 ComdC, Feb70, Sept70; VMCJ-1 ComdC, Jan-Jul70; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Aug70, pp. 3-4; 1st MarDiv, OpO 301A-YR, dtd 10Dec69, Anx B (Intelligence); Dulacki intvw, p. 20; Canton Debrief.
22. 1st Recon Bn ComdC, Jan-Dec70, Jan-Mar71; Mosher Debrief; Haggerty Debrief; for infantry unit intelligence responsibilities, see 1stMarDiv, OpO 301A-YR, dtd 10Dec69, Anx B (Intelligence).
23. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Apr70, p. 3; Dzialo Debrief.
24. Timmes Debrief.
25. Quotation is from Grinalds Debrief; Timmes Debrief comments on importance of the capture of the Quang Nam Security Section documents.
26. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jul70, pp. 12-16; Timmes Debrief; Grinalds Debrief comments on different questioning priorities of ITTs and CITs; Capt B. D. Voronin, debriefing at Camp Butler, Okinawa, 1971, 5065 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).
27. Grinalds Transcript, pp. 38-39.
28. Grinalds Debrief; see also Grinalds Transcript, pp. 41-42.
29. SOP for the VIP is in 1stMarDiv Order 7000.4C, dtd 17Jul70, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jul70, tab B-14; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jul70, p. 16.
30. Nickerson Transcript, pp. 38-39; Dulacki Transcript, pp. 11-13, also recounts the difficulty of working with local agents; Dzialo Debrief emphasizes the necessity for agent networks among the people in waging a counterguerrilla campaign.
31. This account of signal intelligence is drawn from 1st Radio Bn ComdC, Jan-Dec70, Jan-Apr71. Besides monitoring enemy communications, the battalion also listened to American transmissions, noting and reporting violations of communications security.
32. Col Robert H. Piehl, comments on draft ms, 28Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File)
33. Haggerty Debrief; see also Mosher Debrief.
34. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Aug70, pp. 13-14; for early Marine Corps involvement in sensor development and use, see LtCol Robert R. Darron intvw, 3Jun76, pp. 90-8, 105-08 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Darron Transcript.
35. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Aug70, pp. 14-15; Duffel Bag Briefing, pp. 4-11. By early 1970, the Marines were using the Phase III system of sensors, roughly the third generation of the devices, in terms of sophistication of both sensing and transmitting capabilities; for the points of distinction between various models, see Darron Transcript, p. 110.
36. 1stMarDiv Sensor Briefing; Mosher Debrief.
37. Duffel Bag Briefing, p. 11; the quotation is from Col James R. Weaver, debriefing at FMFPac, 27Aug70, Tape 4981 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Weaver Debrief.
38. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Aug70, pp. 15-19; 1stMarDiv Sensor Briefing; Timmes Debrief.
39. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Aug70, pp. 19-20; 1st MAW G-2 ComdC, Mar70, pp. 2-3; Weaver Debrief; Mosher Debrief.
40. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, pp. 14-15, Jan-Feb71, p. 7, Mar-Apr71, p. 8; 1stMarDiv Sensor Briefing; 1stMarDiv, Command Information Summary, G-2 Overview, dtd 12Jan71, Narrative Notes 70 Notebook, and 1stMarDiv G-2 Overview, dtd 31Mar71, in 1stMarDiv Command Information Notebook, Mar71, both notebooks in 1stMarDiv Documents; Mosher Debrief. According to LtCol Mosher, MajGen Widdecke, as division commander, emphasized sensors less than his predecessor, MajGen Wheeler.
41. Grinalds Transcript, pp. 127-132; Simmons Debrief. For other comments on sensors, pro and con, see Timmes, Dzialo, and Mosher Debriefs and FMFPac, MarOpsV, Aug70, pp. 13, 18.
42. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Feb70, p. 9, Dec70, pp. 18-19; Dulacki intvw, p. 22; Canton Debrief; Dzialo Debrief; Haggerty Debrief; for activities of the division and wing G-2 sections, see for example 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jul70, pp. 10-15, and 1st MAW G-2 ComdC, Jul70, pp. 3-5. The division G-2 contained 46 officers and 110-115 enlisted men in mid-1970, see Mosher Debrief.
43. Grinalds Debrief; Metzger Debrief; 1stMarDiv/2d ROKMC Bde/QDSZ Conference Agenda, dtd 4Dec70, in QDSZ Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents; Timmes Debrief; Acting PSA, Quang Nam Province, Report to ComUSMACV for the period 1-31Dec70, dtd 3Jan71, CMH Files.
44. FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-Jun71, p. 4; 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71, pp. 7-10, May71, pp. 8-10; 1st Radio Bn ComdC, Mar71, pt. III, 1Apr-30June71.

The Boobytrap War

Additional sources for this section are: 1stMarDiv, Division Order P3820.2B, dtd 9Dec69, Subj: Countermeasures against Mines and Boobytraps, in 1stMarDiv ComdC, Sep70, tab B-2, hereafter 1stMarDiv Mine/Boobytrap SOP; and the following 1st Marine Division historical interview tapes, all located in the Oral History Collection, History and Museums Division: Maj Dale D. Dorman, et. al. Boobytraps in the 2/1 TAOR, 3-4Feb70, Tape 4771, hereafter 2/1 Boobytrap intvws; 1st Lt Jack W. Klimp, et. al., Enemy Boobytraps Encountered by G/2/1, 29-30Apr70, Tape 4836, hereafter G/2/1 Boobytrap intvws; Enemy Boobytraps Encountered by H/2/1 and F/2/1, 6-10May70, Tape 4847, hereafter H & F/2/1 Boobytrap intvws; and 2dLt Herbert B. Stafford, et. al., Enemy Boobytraps, H/2/5, 10-11July70, Tape 4904, hereafter H/2/5 Boobytrap intvws. Interviews from these tapes will be cited by name of interviewee followed by the short title of the tape.

45. Capt Dennis J. Anderson, 2/1 Boobytrap intvws.
46. Maj Dale D. Dorman, Ibid. For an instance of Vietnamese children planting a boobytrap, with disastrous consequences to themselves when they accidently set it off, see 2/1 ComdC, Apr70, p. 6.

47. The first quotation is from Capt Dennis J. Anderson, 2/1 Boobytrap intvws; the second is from Col Floyd H. Waldrop, debriefing at FMFPac, 19Aug70, Tape 4926 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Waldrop Debrief; the third is from Cpl Ted L. LeMay, H&F/2/1 Boobytrap intvws.

48. Maj Dale D. Dorman, 2/1 Boobytrap intvws; consult also 1stLt Burton I. Cohen, G/2/1 Boobytrap intvws.

49. Grinalds Debrief; consult also Sgt James G. Ingall, G/2/1 Boobytrap intvws, and Maj Dale D. Dorman, 2/1 Boobytrap intvws.

50. The following account of this incident is drawn from: SSgt Thomas G. Ringer, H/2/5 Boobytrap intvws, and 5th Mar Jnl, 22Apr70, in 5th Mar ComdC, Apr70.

51. CG1stMarDiv msg to DistribList, dtd 20Aug70, in Leadership & Discipline Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents.

52. Sgt William Stanley, H&F/2/1 Boobytrap intvws; other comments on morale and tactical effects are Grinalds Transcript, pp. 124-125, and SSgt Thomas G. Ringer, H/2/5 Boobytrap intvws.

53. Capt Dennis J. Anderson, 2/1 Boobytrap intvws; 2/1 ComdC, Jun70, pts. II and III. See 1/7 Jnl, 28May70, 1/7 ComdC, May70, for indications of Marine suspicion about the origins of ordnance children were turning in.

54. Capt Dennis J. Anderson, 2/1 Boobytrap intvws .

55. 1stMarDiv Mine/Boobytrap SOP; 3d MP Bn ComdC, Mar70, p. 4; 3d MP Bn Briefing; 1st MP Bn ComdC, Aug70, p. 5.

56. 2dLt James R. Lindholm, G/2/1 Boobytrap intvws; for an instance of a dog tripping a boobytrap, see 1st MP Bn ComdC, Mar71, p. 17.

57. CG1stMarDiv msg to 1stMarDiv, Subj: Boobytrap Incident, dtd 4Dec70, 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 1-11Dec70, is a typical injunction to Marines not to tamper with boobytraps or try to disarm them, including an account of the most recent example of a Marine ignoring this advice.

58. Sgt Thomas F. Massey, G/2/1 Boobytrap intvws; 1stMarDiv Mine/Boobytrap SOP.

59. Capt Dennis J. Anderson, 2/1 Boobytrap intvws.

60. Grinalds Transcript, pp. 123-124

61. Grinalds Debrief; 2/1 ComdC, May, Jun, Jul, and Aug70.

62. Col William V. H. White, comments on draft ms, 6Jul83 (Vietnam Comment File).

63. Waldrop Debrief sums up the activities of the 5th and 7th Marines.

64. Maj Wallace M. Greene III, "Countermeasures against Mines and Booby Traps," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Dec69, pp. 31-32.

65. CG1stMarDiv msg to DistribList, dtd 20Aug70, in Leadership & Discipline Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents.

66. Maj Dale D. Dorman, 2/1 Boobytrap intvws. 1stMarDiv Mine/Boobytrap SOP sums up training duties of unit commanders.

67. This account of the school's activities, including the quotations, is based on 1stMarDiv Public Affairs Office, Release No. 1069-70, dtd 17Oct70; also FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, pp. 76-77; and 1stMarDiv Command Information Summary, Dec70, dtd 12Jan71, G-3 Overview, in Narrative Notes70 Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents; hereafter 1stMarDiv ComdInfSum, Dec70; and 1st Engineer Bn ComdC, Jan70 through Mar71.

68. 1st Engineer Bn ComdC, Aug70, p. 1, Oct70, pts. II and III, Feb71, pt. II, Mar71, pt. II; Co A, 1st Engineer Bn ComdC, 14-30Apr71.

69. 1stMarDiv ComdInfSum, Dec70; 1stMarDiv G-3 Overview, Mar71, dtd 31Mar71, in 1stMarDiv Command Infotmation Notebook, Mar71, 1stMarDiv Documents.

70. The account of this incident is taken from 1stMarDiv Press Release No. 1132-70, dtd 22 Nov70, and 2/5 Jnl, 22Oct70, in 2/5 ComdC, Oct70.

71. Nickerson Transcript, p. 55. For an example of continuing division exhortations to Marines to take basic precautions, see 1stMarDiv, DivO 10126.1D, Subj: The Wearing or Carrying of Individual Combat Equipment, dtd 25 Dec70, in 1stMarDiv ComdC, Dec70, tab B-21.

72. For the 1970 casualty figures, see 1stMarDiv ComdInfSum, Dec70; for the 10Jan71 incident, see III MAF ComdC, Jan71, p. 11; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jan71, p. 18; and 2/5 Jnl, 10Jan71, in 2/5 ComdC, Jan71.

73. Simmons Debrief.

PART V
Supporting the Troops

CHAPTER 15

FIXED-WING AIR OPERATIONS, 1970-1971

Unless otherwise noted, information in this chapter is taken from FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan70, May-Jun71; MACV ComdHists, 70 and 71; 1st MAW ComdCs, Jan70, 1-14Apr71; 1st MAW ComdHist; and LtGen Keith B. McCutcheon, "Marine Aviation in Vietnam, 1962-1970," in History and Museums Division, HQMC, *The Marines in Vietnam 1954-1973* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1974), pp. 162-195, hereafter cited as McCutcheon, "Aviation in Vietnam." Extensive material also has been drawn from McCutcheon Papers and from MajGen Alan J. Armstrong, File of Papets Relating to Air Ground Relationships, 1969-1970, MCHC, hereafter cited as Armstrong Air/Ground File. The following interviews and debriefings from the Oral History Collection, History & Museums Division have been used extensively: LtGen Keith B. McCutcheon intvw, 22Apr71, hereafter McCutcheon Transcript; MajGen Alan J. Armstrong, debriefing at FMFPac, 29Jun71, Tape 5010, hereafter Armstrong Debrief, and intvw, 25Sep73 and 2Oct73, hereafter Armstrong Transcript; MajGen William G. Thrash, debriefing at FMFPac, 2Jul70, Tape 4850, hereafter Thrash Debrief; and Col Richard H. Rainforth debriefing at FMFPac, 20Aug70, Tape 4927, hereafter Rainforth Debrief.

1st MAW Organization, Strength, and Deployment

All information on 1st MAW strength, organization, and locations is taken from appropriate issues of FMFPac, MarOpsV, and the 1st MAW ComdCs.

1. MACV ComdHist, 70, I, ch. 6, p. 1.

2. Col Robert L. LaMar debriefing at FMFPac, 26Jun70, Tape 4852, Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter LaMar Debrief.

3. BGen Leo J. Dulacki, debriefing at FMFPac, Jun70, Tape 4853, (Oral HistColl, MCHC).

4. MajGen George S. Bowman, Jr., ltr to MajGen McCutcheon, dtd 23Dec69, Box 10, McCutcheon Papers.

5. MajGen William G. Thrash, 1st MAW Briefing for Gen Leonatd F. Chapman, Jr., dtd 10Jan70, Armstrong Air/Ground File, here-

after Thrash, CMC Briefing; Col James R. Weaver, comments on draft ms, 18Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File).
6. Thrash Debrief; Col Walter E. Sparling debriefing at FMFPac, 9Nov70, Tape 4975 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Sparling Debrief; LaMar Debrief; Rainforth Debrief.

Coming to Terms with Single Management

This section is based on material from HQMC, Operational Control of III MAF Air Assets Reference File, Oct68-Oct70, in MCHC, hereafter cited as HQMC Air Control File. Extensive use also has been made of Gen Lucius D. Clay, Jr., USAF (Ret.), intvw, 6Oct77 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter cited as Clay Intvw.

7. MACJOO msg to CGIIIMAF, Subj: Single Management of Strike and Reconnaissance Assets, dtd 7Mar68, in G-3 III MAF Command Relations File, Nov68-27Dec70; McCutcheon, "Aviation in Vietnam," pp. 175-177, and McCutcheon Transcript, pp. 8-1; and Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports*, pp. 341-344, give the Marine and MACV views on the background and reasons for imposition of single management.
8. Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports*, pp. 343-345. For Marine arguments against single management and proposals for overturning it, see HQMC Air Control File, passim.
9. LtGen Herman Nickerson, Jr., intvw, 10Jan73, pp. 88-90 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Nickerson Transcript; LtGen Keith B. McCutcheon ltr to MajGen Norman J. Anderson, dtd 14Sep70, Box 10, McCutcheon Papers.
10. Col Stanley G. Dunwiddie, Jr., debriefing at FMFPac, Jun70, Tape 4891 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Dunwiddie Debrief.
11. The quotation is from Rainforth Debrief. HQMC Point Paper, Subj: Employment of Marine Corps Aviation in Land Combat Operations, dtd 31Dec69, in Operational Control of MAF Air Assets, Point Papers/Talking Papers/Misc. File; Thrash, CMC Briefing.
12. LtGen Keith B. McCutcheon ltr to MajGen Homer S. Hill, DC/S (Air), dtd 22Aug70, Box 10, McCutcheon Papers; see also Rainforth Debrief.
13. ComUSMACV memo to CGIIIMAF, Subj: Proposed MACV Directive 95-4, dtd 25Dec68 and CGIIIMAF msg to ComUSMACV, dtd 12Jan69, HQMC Air Control File; LtGen Keith B. McCutcheon ltr to LtGen Frank C. Tharin, DC/S (Plan&Polices), dtd 30Mar70, and ltr to MajGen Norman J. Anderson, dtd 14Sep70, both in Box 10, McCutcheon Papers; Rainforth Debrief.
14. LtGen Keith B. McCutcheon ltr to MajGen Charles S. Quilter, CG 1st MAW, dtd 19Nov68, Box 12, McCutcheon Papers.
15. For McCutcheon's view on the operational control issue, see HQMC Point Paper, Subj: DC/S (Air) Comments on Proposed CMCM 42-68, dtd 26Sep68, in Operational Control of III MAF Air Assets, Point Papers/Talking Papers/Misc. File; and McCutcheon, memo to DC/S Plans and Policies, Subj: SMS, dtd 14Nov68, in HQMC Air Control File.
16. USMACV Directive No. 10-11, dtd 5Apr70, in G-3 III MAF Command Relations File, Nov68-27Dec70; LtGen McCutcheon ltr to LtGen Frank C. Tharin, dtd 25Apr70, Box 10, McCutcheon Papers.
17. CGIIIMAF memo to ComUSMACV, Subj: Proposed Revision to MACV Directive 95-4, submission of, dtd 6Jul70, in HQMC Air Control File. For background to this draft, see LtGen McCutcheon msg to LtGen Jones, info Gen Chapman, dtd 1Jul70, III MAF message files; LtGen McCutcheon ltr to BGen Homer S. Hill, 7Jul70, and ltr to LtGen Robert E. Cushman, Jr., dtd 16Jul70, both in Box 10, McCutcheon Papers; also McCutcheon Transcript, p. 7.
18. McCutcheon ltr to Gen Leonard F. Chapman, Jr., dtd 16Aug70, in HQMC Air Control File.
19. USMACV Directive No. 95.4, dtd 15Aug70, HQMC Air Control File; Rainforth Debrief.
20. McCutcheon Transcript, p. 7-8.
21. MajGen Homer S. Hill ltr to LtGen Keith B. McCutcheon, dtd 31Aug70, Box 10, McCutcheon Papers; this box contains numerous other comments on Directive 95.4 and explanation of it by McCutcheon, as does HQMC Air Control File.
22. Clay Intvw; LtGen Donn J. Robertson intvw, 24Apr73, pp. 66-7 (Oral HistColl, MCHC); McCutcheon Transcript, pp. 7-8.
23. Col Stephen G. Warren, comments on draft ms, 11Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File).
24. Clay Intvw; Armstrong Debrief; see also Armstrong Transcript, pp. 10-11, 28-30.
25. 1st MAW, ComdHist, pt. III, p. 15; Clay Intvw.
26. CMC memo to CGs FMFLant, FMFPac, and MCDEC, Subj: U.S. Air Operations in RVN, dtd 14Oct70, HQMC Air Control File.
27. Armstrong Transcript, pp. 30-32.
28. Ibid., pp. 28-29.

Attacking the Ho Chi Minh Trail

29. MACV ComdHist70, pt. I, ch. VI, pp. 20-21.
30. Thrash, CMC Briefing.
31. McCutcheon, "Aviation in Vietnam," p. 182.
32. This account of Commando Bolt and Commando Bolt Assassin missions is based on: FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jun70, p. 37, Dec70, p. 53; 1st MAW ComdHist, pt. II, ch. 1, p. 8; Col Neal E. Heffernan, debriefing at FMFPac, 29Jun70, Tape 4890 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Heffernan Debrief; and the following interviews by the 1st MAW Historical Team, all located in the Oral HistColl, Hist&MusDiv: Capt Lawrence G. Karch, 9Jan70, Tape 4756; 1stLt Walter F. Siller, Jr., 9Jan70, Tape 4757; Maj Carl H. Dubock, 9Jan70, Tape 4759; Capt Terrill J. Richardson, 6Apr70, Tape 4826; Maj John H. Trotti, 10Mar70, Tape 4784; 1stLt Arthur A. Vreeland, 6Jul70, Tape 4936; hereafter cited by name of interviewee and tape number.
33. 1stLt Arthur A. Vreeland, Tape 4936.
34. Capt Lawrence G. Karch, Tape 4756.
35. This description of TA-4F operations is based on: H&MS-11 ComdC, Jan-Sep70; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Sep70, p. 23; Heffernan Debrief; LaMar Debrief; Capt Dallas J. Weber, intvw by 1st MAW Historical Team, 4May70 Tape 4838 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Weber Intvw.
36. Weber Intvw.
37. VMCJ-1 ComdC, Jan-Jul70; Rainforth Debrief.
38. Thrash, CMC Debrief; see also 1st MAW ComdHist, pt. II, ch. 1, p. 13; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Oct70, pp. 23-24; and Sparling Debrief.
39. Marine Corps Command Center (MCCC), Items of Significant Interest, dtd 5-6 May70; FMFPac, MarOpsV, May70, pp. 33-34; VMFA-122 ComdC, May70; VMFA-314 ComdC, May-Jun 70.
40. MACV ComdHist70, I, ch. VI, p. 113; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jun70, pp. 36-38, Jul70, pp. 31-32, Aug70, p. 35, Sep70, p. 23, Oct70, p. 22; H&MS-11 ComdC, Sep70; Col Robert W. Teller, debriefing at FMFPac, 13Jul70, Tape 4897 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Teller Debrief; Armstrong Transcript pp. 11, 68.
41. MACV ComdHist, 70, I, ch. VI, pp. 105-111, and ComdHist, 71, I, ch. VI, pp. 9, 29-30; LtGen Keith B. McCutcheon msg to LtGen William K. Jones, dtd 27Sep70 and 24Oct70, and LtGen

Sutherland msg to LtGen McCutcheon, MajGen Milloy, MajGen Hennessey, BGen Jackson, and BGen Hill, dtd 9Oct70, in III MAF Message Files.
42. 1st MAW ComdHist, pt. II, ch. I, pp. 5-8, 11-14, ch. 2, pp. 3-7; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Nov70, pp. 19-20, Dec70, pp. 53-55; VMA(AW)-225 ComdC, Nov70; VMA-311 ComdC, Nov70; VMFA-115ComdC, Dec70.
43. LtGen Keith B. McCutcheon msgs to LtGen William K. Jones, dtd 24Oct70 and 9Nov70, and LtGen Jones msgs to McCutcheon, dtd 14Nov70, all in III MAF message files.
44. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, pp. 29, 48; VMCJ-1 ComdC, 1Jan-14Apr71 and 15Apr-30Jun71; 3d MAB Fact Sheet, Subj: EA-6A Deployment to Da Nang, RVN, dtd 1May71.
45. 1st MAW ComdHist, pt. III, pp. 6-7; VMA-311 ComdC, 1-7May71.

Air Support Trends in Military Region 1

46. MACV ComdHist, 70, I, ch. VI.
47. Thrash Debrief.
48. Monthly sortie totals for the entire year 1970 are given in FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, p. 47.
49. For a breakdown of air sorties by type of aircraft and forces supported, see Ibid., p. 44.
50. Capt Charles W. Fish, intvw by 1st MAW Historical Teams, 14Apr70, Tape 4834 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Fish intvw.
51. MACV ComdHist, 70, Supplement, pp. 1, 24-25; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, p. 41.
52. Col Frank A. Shook, Jr., debriefing at FMFPac, 5Oct70, Tape 4966 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Shook Debrief; Sparling Debrief; Rainforth Debrief.
53. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Feb71, pp. 20-21, Mar-Apr71, pp. 21-23.

Controlling Air Support

Additional source for this section is 1st MAW OpO 303-(YR), dtd 1Jan70, hereafter OpO 303-(YR), 70.

54. This description of the system for calling for and controlling strikes is drawn from: OpO 303-(YR), 70, Anx C; Maj John J. McNamara intvw by 1st MAW Historical Team, 13Apr70, Tape 4833 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter McNamara intvw; Shook Debrief; LaMar Debrief; Fish intvw.
55. Fish intvw; consult also Rainforth Debrief.
56. 1stLt Dennis R. Darnell intvw by 1st MAW Historical Team, 4May70, 4839 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Darnell intvw.
57. OpO 303-(YR), Anx C; Shook Debrief; McNamara intvw; Capt Tertill J. Richardson intvw by 1st MAW Historical Team, 6Apr70, Tape 4826 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).
58. Unless otherwise noted, all material on the Beacon system is from: 1st MAW ComdHist, pt. II , ch. 5, pp. 15-16, 54-55; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Aug70, pp. 30-32; Sparling Debrief.
59. Sparling Debrief.
60. Armstrong Debrief; the following two interviews by the 1st MAW Historical Team and in the Oral HistColl, MCHC, sum up operating problems with the Beacon: 1stLt James J. Ewing, 4May70, Tape 4860; and 1stLt Robert C. McIntyre, 3Aug70, Tape 4943.
61. 1st MAW ComdHist, pt. II, ch. 3, p. 12; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, pp. 57-8; McNamara intvw; Fish intvw.
62. The quotation is from Armstrong Transcript, pp. 13-14; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, pp. 29-30, and May-Jun71, p. 17-18; Sparling Debrief; LtGen McCutcheon msg to LtGen Sutherland, dtd 22Sep70, III MAF message files.

CHAPTER 16

HELICOPTER OPERATIONS AND NEW TECHNOLOGY, 1970-1971

Unless otherwise noted, this chapter is based on the sources cited at the beginning of Chapter 15.

Improving Helicopter Support of the 1st Marine Division

Additional sources for this section are: III MAF, Board Report for Utilization, Command, and Control of III MAF Helo Assets, dtd 25Apr69, hereafter cited as Youngdale Report.

1. LtCol James W. Rider, comments on draft ms, n.d. (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter Rider Comments.
2. Gen Leonard F. Chapman, Jr., Green Letter No. 17-69, dtd 4Nov69.
3. Youngdale Report, passim., especially pp. 5-6; MajGen Alan J. Armstrong, Director Development Center, ltr to Gen Leonard F. Chapman, Jr., dtd 19Nov69, in Armstrong Air/Ground File, see also Armstrong Transcript, pp. 14-15.
4. Thrash, CMC Briefing; also ltr to MajGen Alan J. Armstrong, dtd 19Jan70, in Armstrong Air/Ground File.
5. Armstrong Debrief; Thrash, CMC Briefing; Shook Debrief; Dunwiddie Debrief; McNamara intvw; Fish intvw.
6. Col Haywood R. Smith debriefing at FMFPac, 5Oct70, Tape 4970 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Smith Debrief; 1st MarDiv Bulletin 1500, dtd 9Mar70, tab B-9, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Mar70.
7. 1stLt Michael D. Langston intvw by 1st MAW Historical Team, 4May70, Tape 4892 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).
8. Rider Comments.
9. 1stLt George S. Bennett intvw by 1st MAW Historical Team, 3Aug70, Tape 4945 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).
10. Grinalds Debrief.
11. Rider Comments.
12. Thrash Debrief; Shook Debrief; for the Youngdale Board recommendation, see Youngdale Report, p. 15.
13. Armstrong Transcript, pp. 21-23; 1st MAW ComdHist, pt. II, ch. 4, pp. 27-31.
14. Armstrong Transcript, p. 43.
15. Armstrong Debrief.

Helicopter Operations

Helicopter sorties figures and other statistics are drawn from FMFPac, MarOpsV, for the appropriate months and from the year-end summary in the Dec70 volume, p. 41.

16. Teller Debrief.
17. Ibid.; Youngdale Report, pp. 16-19, specifies the flight hours for each helicopter type; Shook Debrief.
18. Sparling Debrief.
19. Smith Debrief; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar70, pp. 26-27, summarizes development of the Cobra force; Cobra tactics are described

in 1stLt Herbert P. Silva intvw by 1st MAW Historical Team, 15Jun70, Tape 4880 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Silva intvw, and 1stLt Fulton H. Beville intvw by 1st MAW Historical Team, 8Apr70, Tape 4827 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).

20. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Oct70, p. 34, describes the Cobra engine replacement. For the ammunition problem, see Smith Debrief. The final quotation is from Silva intvw.
21. Thrash Debrief; see also Thrash, CMC Briefing.
22. HML-167 ComdCs, Jan70-Jun71; the quotation is from ibid., Jun71.
23. Quotation is from Sparling Debrief; Thrash, CMC Briefing; Thrash Debrief; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar70, p. 28; Lamar Debrief; for accounts of the changing mission of the CH-53, consult the following 1st MAW Historical Team interviews, in Oral HistColl, MCHC: 1stLt James A. Motisi, 9Jul70, Tape 4939, hereafter Motisi intvw; and 1stLt Michael P. Hayes, 10Aug70, Tape 4943, hereafter Hayes intvw.
24. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jun70, p. 32; Hayes intvw; HMH-463 ComdC, Jan-Jun70.
25. Armstrong Transcript, pp. 40-41.
26. Ibid.
27. Unless otherwise noted, this account of Thrashlight operations is drawn from: FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jun70, pp. 33-36, Sep70, pp. 21-22; Thrash Debrief; Lamar Debrief; Hayes intvw; and LtGen Keith B. McCutcheon ltr to MajGen Louis Metzger, dtd 28May70, and ltr to BGen Homer S. Hill, dtd 1Jun70; both in Box 10, McCutcheon Papers.
28. Hayes intvw.
29. LtGen Keith B. McCutcheon ltr to BGen Homer S. Hill, dtd 17Jun70, Box 10, McCutcheon Papers.
30. Thrash Debrief, Motisi intvw.
31. HMH-463 ComdC, Jun70-May71; see Chronology for Sep70 for participation in Operation Tailwind. MAG-16 ComdC, Sep70, p. II-1, contains a description of the operation, although not mentioning Laos by name.
32. Armstrong Transcript, pp. 11-13; LtGen McCutcheon msgs to LtGen Jones, dtd 17Sep70 and 27Sep70, and msg to LtGen Sutherland, info Gen Abrams, dtd 17Sep70, III MAF Message Files.

New Ordnance and Aircraft

Additional sources for this section are: 1st MAW ComdHist, pt. II, ch. 2, pp. 16-17, ch. 4, pp. 3, 13-19; and FMFPac, MarOpsV, Nov70, pp. 25-26, Jan-Feb71, pp. 39-41, Mar-Apr71, p. 26, and May-Jun71, pp. 18-19.

33. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Nov70, pp. 25-26.
34. 1st MAW ComdHist, pt. II, ch. 4, pp. 13-19.
35. 1st MAB Fact Sheet, Subj: Cobra AH-1J Combat Evaluation, dtd 30Apr71; see also Fails, *Marines and Helicopters*, pp. 154-157; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, p. 26.

Aviation Achievements and Costs

36. Personnel losses are compiled from 1st MAW ComdCs, Jan-Dec70 and Jan to 1-14Apr71; aircraft losses are summarized in FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, p. 56, Jan-Feb71, pp. 28-29, and Mar-Apr71, p. 30.
37. McCutcheon, "Aviation in Vietnam," p. 195.

CHAPTER 17

ARTILLERY AND RECONNAISSANCE

Artillery Operations, 1970-1971

Unless otherwise noted, information in this section is drawn from FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan70-May/Jun71; 1stMarDiv ComdCs, Jan70-14Apr71; 11th Mar ComdCs, Jan70-Mar71; 1/11 ComdCs, Jan70-May71; 2/11 ComdCs, Jan70-Mar71; 3/11 ComdCs, Jan70-Sep70; 4/11 ComdCs, Jan70-Sep70; 1/13ComdCs, Jan-Mar70; The following debriefings were drawn upon extensively; both are located in the Oral HistColl, MCHC: Col Don D. Ezell debriefing at FMFPac, 8Apr70, Tape 4837, hereafter Ezell Debrief; and Col Ernest R. Reid, Jr., debriefing at FMFPac, 2Sep70, Tape 4952, hereafter Reid Debrief. Unless otherwise noted, all oral history interviews and debriefings cited are in the Oral HistColl, MCHC.

1. 11th Mar msg to 11th Mar adcon/opcon, dtd 19Jan70; 1st Mar Div OpO 301A-YR, dtd 10Dec69, Anx F (Artillery): for positions, see the ComdCs for Jan 70 referred to in the compendium footnote.
2. 1st 175mm Gun Battery (SP) ComdC, Jan70; 3d 175mm Gun Battery (SP) ComdC, Jan70; 1st 8-Inch Howitzer Battery (SP), ComdC, Jan70; 3d 8-Inch Howitzer Battery (SP) ComdC, Jan70.
3. 5th 175mm Gun Battery (SP) ComdCs, Jan-Feb70.
4. For the role of the towed 155mm howitzer, see LtCol William Plaskett, Jr., "New Life for Towed 155 Howitzer," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Feb69, p. 51. 2/11 ComdC, Aug70, pp. 6, 9, covers the battalion's use of the 155s.
5. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan69, p. 45.
6. 1st MarDiv OpO 301A-YR, dtd 10Dec69.
7. Reid Debrief; for an example of a special preemptive fire plan, in this case covering the June 1970 provincial elections, see 3/11 ComdC, Jun70, pt. II.
8. Ezell Debrief.
9. Ibid.; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Apr70, pp. 2-3.
10. Ezell Debrief; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Nov69, p. 3, Apr70, pp. 3-4, Aug70, p. 7, Overview, p. 15; Reid Debrief. LtCol Pieter L. Hogaboom, comments on draft ms, 10Jun83 (Vietnam Comment File); FMFPac, MarOpsV, Nov69, p. 3.
11. 11th Marines ComdC, Aug70, p. 6, outlines the IOD team training program. Ezell Debrief details many FO "tricks of the trade."
12. 3/11 ComdC, Jan70, pt. III; 11th Mar ComdC, Jan70, p. 5; Col Floyd H. Waldrop, comments on draft ms, 16Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File).
13. The quotation is from Ezell Debrief; for the link to Kingfisher missions, see 3/11 S-3 Jnl, dtd 10Mar70, 3/11 ComdC, Mar70; for the supposed prisoner incident, see 3/11 S-3 Jnl, dtd 29Jan70, in 3/11 ComdC, Jan70; for previous incident also see 1/11 S-3 Jnl, dtd 29Jan70, 1/11 ComdC, Jan70.
14. Col Edwin M. Rudzis, comments on draft ms, 11Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter Rudzis Comments..
15. LtCol Charles R. Dunbaugh, comments on draft ms, 10May83 (Vietnam Comment File).
16. Col Edward A. Wilcox debriefing at FMFPac, 4Jul70, Tape 4889, hereafter Wilcox Debrief.
17. Ezell Debrief. The IOD received high praise from most III MAF

and 1st Marine Division commanders and staff officers; for examples, consult Col John S. Canton (III MAF AC/S G-2) debriefing at FMFPac, 22Dec69, Tape 4737, hereafter Canton Debrief; Col Edward Dzialo (III MAF G-2) debriefing at FMFPac, 2Jul70, Tape 4888; and Col Ralph E. Estey (III MAF AC/S G-3) debriefing at FMFPac, 14Dec70, Tape 4979.

18. Co D, 1st Recon Bn Patrol Report "Pal Joey K," dtd 12Aug70, tab A-25, 1st Recon Bn ComdC, Aug70. For other probes against IOD sites, see 11th Mar ComdCs, Nov70, pt. III, Dec70, pt. III, and Jan71, pt. II.

19. 3/11 ComdC, May70, pt. III; see also 1/11 ComdC, Aug70, p. 11; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, pp. 13-14; and Ezell Debrief.

20. 11th Mar ComdCs, Sep70, p. 6, Oct70, pt. III, 11th Mar S-2 Jnl, 24-30Nov70, in 11th Mar ComdC, Nov70; 11th Mar S-2 Jnl, 2Dec70, in 11th Mar ComdC, Dec70; casualty statistics are from FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, pp. 13-14.

21. Rudzis Comments.

22. Ibid.

23. Ezell Debrief; AO section activities are covered month by month in 11th Mar ComdCs, Jan70-Mar71; for an example of engagement of radio intercept targets, see 3/11 ComdC, Jul70, pt. III.

24. 1stMarDiv Order 1560.4, dtd 6Mar71, in 1stMarDiv ComdC, Mar71; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Feb71, pp. 16-18; May-Jun71, p. 57; Reid Debrief. The Tinder computer tapes, both data base and program, are now in the National Archives; duplicates of this material are in the MCHC.

25. Ezell Debrief; McCutcheon Transcript p. 33; for H&I fire reduction at the battalion level, see 1/11 ComdC, Sep70, p. 5.

26. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Apr70, pp. 2, 32-33; for an example of plans for a heliborne provisional battery and for firebase deployments, see 1/11 ComdC, Aug70, p. 12, and 2/11 ComdC, Oct70, p. 7.

27. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jun70, pp. 2-3; Reid Debrief; Col Ernest R. Reid, Jr., memo to CG1stMarDiv, Subj: Artillery Raid of 30May70, summary of, dtd 1Jun70, Item 103 (1), 1stMarDiv Admin Files; 11th Mar ComdC, May70, p. 5; 2/11 ComdC, May70, p. 6.

28. Col Ernest R. Reid, Jr., memo to CG1stMarDiv, Subj: Summary of Artillery Raid of 2Jun70, dtd 3Jun70, Item 103 (2), 1st MarDiv Admin Files: 11th Mar ComdC, Jun70, pp. 4-5; 2/11 ComdC, Jun70, pp. 6-7.

29. Col John D. Shoup, Comments on draft ms, 15Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File), herafter Shoup Comments.

30. 1stMarDiv OpO 301A-YR, dtd 10Dec69, Anx E (Fire Support Coordination); Ezell Debrief.

31. Shoup Comments.

32. Wilcox Debrief: Some of the IOD teams were under the operational and administrative control of various battalions of the 11th Marines; others were directly controlled and administered by the artillery regimental headquarters. 11th Mar ComdCs, Jul70, p. 6. Sep70, p. 6.

33. Reid Debrief; Ezell Debrief discusses coordination problems with ARVN.

34. For examples of Marine support for ARVN operations, see 2/11 ComdCs, Feb70, Mar70, Apr70, May and Jun70 and 4/11 ComdC, Jun70. The Hai Van FSCC is covered in 1/11 ComdCs, May70, pp. 9-10, Jul70, p. 10, Aug70, pp. 11-12.

35. Ezell Debrief; 11th Mar ComdCs, Apr70, pp. 4-5, May70, p. 5; 2/11 ComdC, Apr70, p. 6.

36. 11th Mar ComdC, Jan70-Mar71; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70; pp. 10-11; 1stMarDiv ComdCs, Jan70-Mar71.

37. McCutcheon Transcript, p. 33.

Reconnaissance Operations, 1970-1971

Additional sources for this section are: FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan70-May/Jun71; 1st Recon Bn ComdCs, Jan70-Mar71; 1st Force Recon Co ComdCs, Jan-Aug70; 3d Force Recon Co ComdCs, Jan-Feb70. Extensive use has been made of Col William C. Drumright debriefing at FMFPac, 17Aug70, Tape 4928 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Drumright Debrief. All oral history interviews cited in this section are from OralHistColl, MCHC. Extensive use also has been made of Lieutenant Commander Ray W. Stubbe, CHC, USN, "Paddles, Parachutes, and Patrols: A History of Specialized Reconnaissance Activities of the United States Marine Corps" (ms, MCHC, 1978), hereafter Stubbe, PPP.

38. 3d Force Recon Co ComdC, Jan70; Stubbe PPP, pp. 539-542; Canton Debrief; BGen George E. Dooley, debriefing at FMFPac, 23Dec69, Tape 4733.

39. 1st Force Recon Co ComdCs, Jan-Feb70.

40. 1st Recon Bn ComdC, Mar70, pt. I; 3d Force Recon Co ComdC, Jan70; Stubbe PPP, pp. 542-543; 1st Force Recon Co ComdC, Mar70.

41. 1st Recon Bn ComdC, Jun70, p. 6; for the various types of patrol activities, see 1st Recon Bn Patrol Reports, Jan70-Mar71, filed with 1st Recon Bn ComdCs, Jan70-Mar71, and 1st Force Recon Co Patrol Reports, Jan-Aug70, in 1st Force Recon Co ComdCs, Jan-Aug70.

42. Drumright Debrief.

43. Col George C. Fox, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3 of III MAF during the first half of 1970, criticized the reconnaissance Marines for being too aggressive on patrol and compromising their main mission by initiating too many fights. Consult Fox's debriefing at FMFPac, 6May70, Tape 4807.

44. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Aug70, pp. 4-5; Drumright Debrief.

45. The following account of the 14 June 1970 action is based on: Co E, 1st Recon Bn Patrol Report "Flakey Snow," dtd 14Jun70, tab A-155, 1st Recon Bn Patrol Reports, Jun70; and Sgt Frank E. Diaz, intvw by 1stMarDiv Historical Team, 23Jun70, Tape 4866. Quotations are from the Diaz intvw.

46. 1stLt Peter F. Goetz, intvw by 1st MAW Historical Team, 10Aug70, Tape 4948. All quotations from Lt Goetz are from this tape.

47. Co C, 1st Recon Bn Patrol Report "Movable," dtd 3Sep70, tab A-22, 1st Recon Bn Patrol Reports, Jun70.

48. Drumright Debrief.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Aug70, p. 4; for an example of a reconnaissance attack on a camp, see Co B, 1st Recon Bn Patrol Report, "Clay Pipe," dtd 8Aug70, tab A-38, 1st Recon Bn Patrol Reports, Aug70.

51. For the tiger incident: Patrol Report "Rockmat," dtd 8May70, tab B-13, 1st Force Recon Co ComdC, May70. For the extraction accident: Co B, 1st Recon Bn, Patrol Report "Chili Pepper," dtd 2Sep70, tab A-7, 1st Recon Bn Patrol Reports, Sep70. The Leftwich crash is covered in Chapter 6.

52. Drumright Debrief; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Apr70, p. 9, Aug70, p. 5.

53. Drumright Debrief; LtGen Keith B. McCutcheon ltr to MajGen Rathvon McC Tompkins, dtd 14Jul70, Box 10, McCutcheon Papers.

54. The quotation is from ibid. For details and schedule of the indoctrination course, see 1st Recon Bn Order 3500.1, dtd 16Jan70, 1st Recon Bn ComdC, Jan70.
55. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Aug70, pp. 5-6; 1st Recon Bn Bulletin 3500, dtd 10Mar70, and Bulletin 1510, dtd 7May70, in 1st Recon Bn ComdCs, Mar70 and Jun70, describe the courses respectively for ARVN and Korean troops. Consult also Drumright Debrief.
56. 1stMarDiv staff memos, Subj: QDSZ Conferences, dtd 2Mar70, 26Apr70, 10May70, 16May70, 24May70, and 4Jul70, tab B-21 in 1stMarDiv ComdCs, Mar, Apr, May, and Jul70. For comment on limited South Vietnamese reconnaissance capabilities, consult LtCol Charles M. Mosher, debriefing at FMFPac, 17Sep70, Tape 4959.
57. 1st Recon Bn ComdC, Aug-Sep70; 1st Force Recon Co ComdC, Aug70; Stubbe, PPP, p. 547; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, p. 17; Col John W. Haggerty, III, debriefing at FMFPac, 15Oct70, Tape 4965, hereafter Haggerty Debrief.
58. Haggerty Debrief; 1st Recon Bn ComdC, Oct70, pt. II; Co B, 1st Recon Bn Patrol Report "Impressive" (PPB), dtd 18Oct70, tab A-19, 1st Recon Bn Patrol Reports, Oct70, details operations of the first patrol base in the Que Sons and summarizes advantages of this method of operation.
59. LtGen Bernard E. Trainor, comments on draft ms, 17Jan86 (Vietnam Comment File).
60. 1st Recon Bn ComdCs, Dec70, tab G, and Feb71, tab D; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, p. 17.
61. 1st Recon Bn ComdC, Mat71; Co A (Rein), 1st Recon Bn ComdCs, 1-14Apr71, 15-30Apr71; 1-13May71.

CHAPTER 18

LOGISTICS, 1970-1971

Material for this chapter is drawn from: FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan70-May/Jun71 and Overview; FMFPac, ComdCs, Jan70-Jun71; III MAF ComdCs, Jan70-Apr71; 1stMarDiv ComdCs, Jan70-Apr71; 1st MAW ComdCs, Jan70-Apr71; 3d MAB ComdCs, 13Apr-Jun71; FLC ComdCs, Jan70-Jun71. Much information is drawn from Col James D. Soper, "A View from FMFPac of Logistics in the Western Pacific, 1965-1971," in *The Marines in Vietnam: An Anthology and Annotated Bibliography* (Washington: History and Museums Division, HQMC, 1974), pp. 200-217, hereafter Soper, "Logistics." Extensive use has been made of BGen Mauro J. Padalino debriefing at FMFPac, 26Oct70, Tape 4971, hereafter Padalino FMFPac Debrief, and debriefing at HQMC, 8Jan71, Tape 6135, hereafter Padalino HQMC Debrief, both in Oral HistColl, MCHC. Unless otherwise noted, all oral history tapes and transcripts cited in this chapter are located in the Oral HistColl, MCHC.

Supplying III MAF

Additional sources for this section are: 1st FSR ComdCs, Jan70-Apr71; and FLSG ComdCs, Jan70-Sep70, in FLC ComdCs.

1. FLC ComdC, Jan70, p. 3, and tab K-2.
2. 1st FSR ComdCs, Jan70-Apr71, contain ComdCs of Headquarters and Service, Supply, and Maintenance Bns. For details of the III MAF equipment maintenance system, see FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jun70, pp. 42-44, Dec70, pp. 73-74; and Soper, "Logistics," pp. 206-207.
3. FLSG-B ComdCs, Jan-Sep70.
4. FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-Jun71, pp. 55-57.
5. 3/5 ComdC, Mar70, pt. III; 1stMarDiv Order P4400.7E, dtd 15Apr70, tab B-16, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Apr70; Col Miller M. Blue debriefing at FMFPac, 3Feb71, 4987, hereafter Blue Debrief.
6. 1st Shore Party Bn ComdC, Jan70; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jul70, pp. 40-43.
7. Colonel James G. Dixon, comments on draft ms, 11May83 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter Dixon Comments.
8. Col William C. McGraw, Jr., debriefing at FMFPac, 20Jul70, Tape 4896, hereafter McGraw Debrief; Col Lawrence J. Stein, debriefing at FMFPac, 15Oct70, Tape 4973. For details of FMFPac's role in aviation logistics, see FMFPac ComdCs, Jan70-Jun71, especially pt. II. VAdm Edwin B. Hooper, USN, *Mobility, Support, Endurance: A Story of Naval Operational Logistics in the Vietnam War, 1965-1968* (Washington: Naval History Division, 1972), pp. 17-18, outlines Navy Logistic command responsibilities, including those for aviation support.
9. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Overview, p. 53, Jan70, pp. 40-41, Aug70, p. 44, Dec70, pp. 86-87; MWSG-17 ComdCs, Jan-Aug70.
10. Col Edmund G. Derning, Jr., debriefing at FMFPac, 10Aug70, Tape 4958; 1/5 ComdC, Feb70, p. 3-7. For various supply shortages, consult: Col Ernest R. Reid, debriefing at FMFPac, dtd 2Sep70, 4952; FLC ComdC, Jan70; FMFPac MarOpsV, Jun70, p. 45, Aug70, p. 43; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jan70, p. 26, Aug70, p. 30, Sep70, p. 30.

FLC Phases Down

11. 1st Shore Party Bn ComdC, Feb70; Co C (Rein), 1st Shore Party Bn ComdC, Mar70; 1st Engineer Bn ComdC, Mar70; 1st FSR ComdC, Mar70; FLSG-B ComdC, Mat70, in FLC ComdC, Mar70.
12. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Sep70, pp. 27-29; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Sep70, p. 29; FLSG-B ComdCs, May-Sep70; FLC ComdC, Jul70; 1st FSR ComdCs, May70, Sep70, Oct70.
13. FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-Jun71, pp. 55-57.
14. Col Robert W. Calvert, debriefing at FMFPac, 12Oct70, Tape 4969, hereafter Calvert Debrief; 1st FSR ComdCs, Jun70, Jul70, Oct70; FLC ComdC, Dec70.

The End of Naval Support Activity Da Nang

Additional sources for this section are: III MAF I Corps Tactical Zone Common Service Support Responsibilities File, 3Jun69-1Feb70, hereafter cited as III MAF CSS File; U.S. Naval Support Activity, Da Nang, ComdHist 69 and ComdHist 70 (OAB, NHD), hereafter USNSAD ComdHist, with year; 47th Military History Detachment, USA, "History of the US Army Assumption of the Common Service Support Mission from the U.S. Navy in I Corps Tactical Zone, Republic of Vietnam," dtd Aug70 (Folder 5, Box 7, 71A2312, FRC, Suitland, Md.), hereafter cited as Army CSS History; and Cdr Frank C. Collins, Jr., USN, "Maritime Support of the Campaign in I Corps," in *The Marines in Vietnam: An Anthology and Annotated Bibliography* (Washington: History and Museums Div, HQMC, 1974), pp. 232-253, hereafter Collins, "Maritime Support." Extensive use has been made also of MajGen Wilbur E. Simlik intvw, 14Oct77, Tape 6239, hereafter Simlik intvw; and Dulacki Debrief.

15. Collins, "Maritime Support," pp. 232-233, 236-240; USNSAD ComdHist 69, p. 19.
16. Army CSS History, pp. 2-4; Maj Donald R. Davis, intvw by 15th

Military History Detachment, U.S. Army, dtd 26Jun70 (Folder 4, Box 7, 71A2312, FRC, Suitland, Md.), hereafter Davis intvw.
17. ComNavForV msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 3Jun69, III MAF CSS File.
18. CGIIIMAF msg to ComNavForV, dtd 4Jun69, in ibid.; Simlik intvw.
19. Col Miller M. Blue, comments on draft ms, 5Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File).
20. Simlik intvw.
21. This account of the NSA Da Nang phasedown planning is based on: III MAF CSS File; USNSAD ComdHist 69, p. 137; Army CSS History, pp. 5-7; Davis intvw; III MAF ComdC, Jan70, p. 28.
22. Col James A. Sloan, comments on draft ms, 6Jul83 (Vietnam Comment File).
23. Collins, "Maritime Support," pp. 252-253; USNSAD ComdHist 70, pp. 2-5.
24. LtGen Leo J. Dulacki, USMC (Ret), ltr to Oral History Unit, MCHC, dtd 8Nov77; III MAF ComdC, May70, pp. 22-23, Jun70, p. 24; FLC ComdC, May 70, p. 4, Jun70, p. 4; Admin III MAF msg to CGFMFPac, dtd 19May70, Admin FMFPac msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 20May70, III MAF Message Files; BGen Dulacki msg to BGen Houghton, dtd 19May70, FMFPac Message Files.
25. III MAF ComdC, Jul70, p. 22; FLC ComdC, Jul70, p. 4; USNSAD ComdHist 70, pp. 6-12; Army CSS History, pp. 16-17, tab 1.
26. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Nov70, p. 25, Mar-Apr71, p. 46; FMFPac ComdCs, 1Jan-30Jun70, p. 25, 1Jul-31Dec70, p. 44; III MAF ComdCs, Dec70, pp. 24-28, Jan71, p. 22, Mar71, pp. 20-21; FLC ComdC, Jan70, p. 4 and tab H, Oct70, p. 4, Dec70, p. 4, Mar71, p. 7; 3d MAB Fact Sheet, Subj: Class V(W) Munitions, dtd 2May71; 3d MAB Fact Sheet, Subj: Class V(A) Munitions, dtd 2May71; 3d MAB ComdC,1-28Jun71, p. 8.
27. III MAF ComdCs, Jul70, p. 21, Aug70, p. 20, Sep70, p. 21; Army CSS History, pp. 26-27; Padalino FMFPac Debrief; Calvert Debrief; Blue Debrief; Dulacki Debrief; Col Allan T. Wood, debriefing at FMFPac, 24Nov70, tape 4983, hereafter Wood Debrief.
28. LtCol William R. Fails intvw, 2Jan79, Tape 6365, hereafter Fails intvw; LtGen Keith B. McCutcheon msg to LtGen William J. McCaffrey, USA, dtd 16Sep70, III MAF Message Files.
29. Fails intvw; LtGen Keith B. McCutcheon msg to LtGen William J. McCaffrey, USA, dtd 20Sep70, III MAF Message Files, expresses McCutcheon's appreciation of prompt Army response to Marine requirements.
30. Simlik intvw; LtGen Leo J. Dulacki, USMC (Ret), ltr to Oral History Unit, MCHC, dtd 8Nov77.

Engineer Support

Additional sources for this section are: 1st Engineer Bn ComdCs, Jan-Mar71; 7th Engineer Bn ComdCs, Jan-Aug70; and 9th Engineer Bn ComdCs, Jan-Aug70.

31. Col Nicholas A. Canzona debriefing at FMFPac, 4Mar70, Tape 4796; III MAF ComdC, Mar70, p. 24; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jan70, p. 25.
32. Dixon Comments.
33. FLC Order 5400.7, dtd 8Aug70, tab K, FLC ComdC, Aug70; FLC ComdC, Nov70, tab F-1; 1st FSR ComdC, Jul70; Co A, 7th Engineer Bn ComdCs, 19-31Jul70 and 1-10Jun71.
34. Dixon Comments.
35. LtGen Herman Nickerson debriefing at FMFPac, 10Mar70, Tape 4806, explains the strategic significance of road building; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Apr70, p. 32, Jun70, pp. 41-42, Nov70, pp. 22-23, Mar-Apr71, p. 47; III MAF ComdC, Jul70, p. 21; 1st Engineer Bn ComdC, Apr70; 7th Engineer Bn ComdC, Jul70.
36. 1st Engineer Bn ComdC, Jul70, pp. 1-4; 1stMarDiv Order P3820.2B, dtd 9Dec69, Subj: Countermeasures against Mines and Boobytraps, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Dec69, tab B-12, describes enemy road mining techniques and Marine countermeasures.
37. 1st Engineer Bn ComdC, Mar-May70; 9th Engineer Bn ComdC, Jul70, p. 5; Co A (Rein), 7th Engineer Bn ComdC, 21-31Dec70; 1stMarDiv G-3, Summaries of Discussion, 2d ROKMC/QDSZ Conference, 13Mar70, 5Jun70, 19Jun70, 28Aug70, tab B-21, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Aug70; 1stMarDiv Staff Memo, Subj: Summary of Discussion QDSZ/2d ROKMC 1stMarDiv Conference, Nov70, dtd 9Nov70, tab B-21, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Nov70; 1stMarDiv Agenda Items for 1stMarDiv/2d ROKMC/QDSZ Weekly Conferences, dtd 19Jun70, 28Aug70, and 25Oct70, in QDSZ Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents.
38. FMFPac, MarOpsV, May70, pp. 38-40; 9th Engineer Bn ComdC, Jan70, May70; 7th Engineer Bn ComdC, Apr70, p. 12, Jul70; 1st Engineer Bn ComdCs, Jan-Mar71.
39. Dixon Comments.
40. Col Edward A. Wilcox debriefing at FMFPac, 4Jul70, Tape 4889, hereafter Wilcox Debrief; 2/1 ComdC, Jun70, pt. II-B, gives an example of cleared areas being overgrown again.
41. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Feb70, p. 31, details construction of the Wonderarches; 1st Engineer Bn ComdC, Aug70, contains instances of Marine engineer aid in constructing ARVN firebases.
42. 1st Engineer Bn ComdCs, Sep-Oct70.
43. Ibid., Feb-Mar71; Co A, 1st Engineer Bn ComdCs, 1-13Apr71, 14-30Apr71.
44. Dixon Comments.
45. Ibid.

Motor Transport

Additional sources for this section are: 1st Motor Transport Bn ComdCs, Jan70-Mar71; 7th Motor Transport Bn ComdCs, Jan70 and 1Feb-13Mar70; 11th Motor Transport Bn ComdC, Jan70-Jun71; Headquarters and Service Battalion, 1st FSR ComdCs, Jan70-Jun71, in the 1st FSR ComdCs, Jan70-Apr71; FLC ComdCs, Apr-Jun71.

46. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, pp. 82-83.
47. Ibid., Aug70, pp. 42-43; III MAF ComdC, Sep70, p. 21; 1st Motor Transport Bn ComdC, Dec70; 11th Motor Transport Bn ComdC, Jan71.
48. CO, 1st Motor Transport Bn, memo to CG 1stMarDiv, Subj: Report on mine effect; antifragmentation armor kits . . . for 2½ tons "M" series vehicles, dtd 12Nov70, in 1st Motor Transport Bn ComdC, Nov70.
49. 11th Motor Transport Bn ComdC, Nov-Dec70; Blue Debrief; Wood Debrief; FMFPac ComdC, 1Jul-31Dec70, pp. 43-44; Headquarters and Service Bn, 1st FSR ComdC, Jan71; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, p. 84; LtGen Keith B. McCutcheon to MajGen Louis Metzger, dtd 28Nov70, Box 10, McCutcheon Papers.

Medical Services

Additional sources for this section are: 1st Medical Bn ComdCs, Jan70-Apr71; and 1st Hospital Co ComdCs, Jan70 and 1-26Feb70.

50. III MAF ComdC, Jan70, pp. 34-35; Collins, "Maritime Support," pp. 248-249; FMFPac, MarOpsV, May70, pp. 37-38.
51. 1st Dental Co ComdC, Mar-Sep70; 11th Dental Co ComdC Mar70-May71; Capt Meredith H. Mead, DC, USN, comments on draft ms, 8Jun83 (Vietnam Comment File).
52. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, pp. 81-82.
53. Ibid., Dec67, p. 105, Dec69, p. 77, Dec 70, p. 80.
54. 1st Hospital Co ComdC, 1-26Feb70; 1st Medical Bn ComdC, Mar70; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar70, p. 36.
55. LtGen Leo J. Dulacki, USMC (Ret), ltr to Oral History Unit, MCHC, dtd 8Nov77; Simlik intvw; CGIIIMAF msg to ComNavForV, dtd 13May70, and CGIIIMAF msg to CGFMFPac, dtd 13May70, III MAF Message Files.
56. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, p. 80; 1st Medical Bn ComdCs, Sep70 and 1-14Apr71; 3d MAB ComdC, May71, p. 21; Co A, 1st Medical Bn ComdC, 8-25Jun71.

CHAPTER 19

THE LOGISTICS OF REDEPLOYMENT

Unless otherwise noted, this chapter is based on: FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan70-May/Jun71; III MAF ComdCs, Jan70-Apr71; 1stMarDiv ComdCs, Jan70-Apr71; 1st MAW ComdCs, Jan70-Apr71; 3d MAB ComdCs, 15Apr-Jun71; FLC ComdCs, Jan70-Jun71; Soper, "Logistics;" Padalino FMFPac Debrief and HQMC Debrief; Lt Gen William K. Jones intvw, 5Jun73 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Jones Transcript; McCutcheon Transcript; Armstrong Transcript and Armstrong Debrief; Col Hugh S. Aitken, debriefing at FMFPac, 4Mar71, Tape 5007 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Aitken Debrief. Much material also has been drawn from BGen James R. Jones, Debrief of Tour as CG Force Logistic Command, for period 23Oct70 to 15Jun71, dtd 4Jun71, hereafter Jones FLC Debrief, and from CinCPacFlt, Pacific Fleet Operations Review, Jan-Jun71 (OAB, NHD), hereafter PacFltOps Review, with month.

The 'Mixmaster' of Personnel

1. Colonel Herschel L. Johnson, Jr., comments on draft ms, 14Apr83 (Vietnam Comments File).
2. For a typical planning sequence, that for Keystone Robin Alpha, see CinCPac msg to III MAF, dtd 19Jun70, in G-3 III MAF Keystone Robin File. Soper, "Logistics," pp. 203, 209, describes earlier planning efforts for the redeployments as a whole.
3. FMFPac ComdCs, 1Jan-30Jun70, 1Jul-31Dec70, 1Jan-30Jun71.
4. Simlik intvw.
5. Jones Transcript, pp. 77-78.
6. III MAF ComdCs, Jan70-Apr71; Simlik intvw; III MAF OPlan 183-69, dtd 1Sep69, is the basic III MAF redeployment plan and outlines the division of responsibility among subordinate commands; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jan70, p. 25; 1stMarDiv Order 4400.25A, dtd 2Dec70, tab B-6, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Dec70; FLC ComdC, Jan70, p. 6, and tab K-4.
7. LtGen William K. Jones, presentation to 1971 HQMC General Officers' Symposium, tab J, 1971 General Officers' Symposium Book, hereafter Jones, 1971 Symposium Presentation.
8. Redeployment criteria for Keystones Bluejay and Robin Alpha are published in III MAF *Sea Tiger*, 30Jan70, 6Feb70, 14Aug70, 21Aug70; those for Keystone Robin Charlie are in CG1stMarDiv msg to 1stMarDiv, dtd 19Jan71, 2/1 ComdC, Jan71.
9. Jones, 1971 Symposium Presentation; III MAF OPlan 183-69, dtd 1Sep69, Anx I (Personnel); FMFPac ComdC, 1Jan-30Jun70, pp. 13-14, 1Jul-31Dec70, p. 32; *Sea Tiger*, 13Nov70, describes the FLC personnel transfer system; BGen Louis H. Wilson msg to BGen Leo J. Dulacki, dtd 30Jan70, III MAF CSS File; CGFMFPac msg to CGs III MAF, 1stMarDiv, 1st MAW, FLC, I MAF, 3dMarDiv, 1st MAW (Rear), MCB Camp Butler, CO 3d FSR, dtd 15Sep70, III MAF Message Files; CG1stMarDiv msg to 1stMarDiv, dtd 19Jan71, 2/1 ComdC, Jan71.
10. Col Walter E. Sparling, debriefing at FMFPac, 9Nov70, Tape 4975 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Sparling Debrief; McCutcheon Transcript, pp. 18-19; CGIIIMAF msg to CGFMFPac, dtd 23Mar70, FMFPac Message Files; Armstrong Debrief; McGraw Debrief. These are only a sampling of the debriefing and messages expressing concern at the efforts of the "mixmaster."
11. Armstrong Transcript, p. 9.
12. Col Robert W. Teller, debriefing at FMFPac, 13Jul70, Tape 4897 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).
13. Armstrong Transcript, pp. 4-5; Admin FMFPac msg to CGIII-MAF, dtd 13Aug70, and CG1stMarDiv msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 15Aug70, III MAF Message Files, discuss the impact of the Keystone Robin Alpha changes. Consult also: Col Lawrence J. Stien, debriefing at FMFPac, 15Oct70, Tape 4973 (Oral HistColl, MCHC), hereafter Stien Debrief; Col Robert L. Parnell, Jr., debriefing at FMFPac, 3Aug70, Tape 4925 (Oral HistColl, MCHC); Armstrong Debrief; Col Don H. Blanchard, Comments on draft ms, 2Jun83 (Vietnam Comment File).
14. FMFPac ComdC, 1Jul-31Dec70, pp. 6, 11; MajGen William G. Thrash, debriefing at FMFPac, 2Jul70, Tape 4850 (Oral HistColl, MCHC); Col Paul B. Henley, debriefing at FMFPac, 13Jul70, Tape 4898; Wilcox Debrief.
15. Aitken Debrief.
16. III MAF OPlan 183-69, dtd 1Sep69, outlines the basic redeployment sequence, as does FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-Jun71, pp. 46-48. 5th Mar ComdCs, Dec70-Mar71 recount that regiment's preparations.
17. "1/5 News about the Pros," dtd 24Mar71, in 1/5 ComdC, Mar71. III MAF used the 9th Engineer Battalion cantonment and later Hill 34 as stand-down areas; see Col John W. Haggerty III, debriefing at FMFPac, 15Oct70, Tape 4965, hereafter Haggerty Debrief; and 1/5 ComdC, Feb71, pt. II. For assistance to withdrawing units by a still-active unit, see 3d 8-Inch Howitzer Battery ComdC, 15-30Apr71, pt. III.
18. 3/5 ComdC, Feb71, pt. III.

'Mixmastering' of Equipment and Real Estate

19. III MAF OPlan 183-69, dtd 1Sep69, Anx E (Logistic), dtd 25Sep69; CGFMFPac msg to CMC, dtd 19Dec69, CMC msg to CGFMFPac, dtd 31Dec69, III MAF Force Reduction Planning File, 17Dec69-7Jan70; CGFMFPac msg to CMC, dtd 11Mar70, III MAF Message Files; FLC Order 4500.2, dtd 9Mar71, tab F, FLC ComdC, Mar71; Stien Debrief; Fails intvw; also LtCol William R. Fails, comments on draft ms, n.d. (Vietnam Comment File).
20. LtCol Robert E. Wehrle intvw, 9May83 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).
21. Maj Robert T. Himmerich, comments on draft ms, 28Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File).
22. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Aug70, pp. 38-39, Dec70, pp. 68, 70-72,

Jan-Feb71, pp. 33-34; Jones, 1971 Symposium Presentation; Soper, "Logistics," p. 211; 3d MAB Fact Sheet, Subj: Equipment Redistribution, dtd 2May71.

23. Wood Debrief, FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, pp. 70-71, Mar-Apr71, p. 38.

24. Final statistics are in 3d MAB ComdC, May71, p. 16. 1stMarDiv Order 4520.1, dtd 14Oct70, tab B-22, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Oct70, sets standards for equipment to be transferred. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Nov70, pp. 23-25. III MAF/3d MAB CG's Command Information Notebook, Apr71, in 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71; Padalino Debrief; Wood Debrief.

25. Gen Kenneth McLennan, comments on draft ms, 28Jun83 (Vietnam Comment File).

26. FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-Jun71, pp. 50-51; the MACV interservice equipment program was delayed by problems in working out procedures; consult Wood Debrief.

27. Calvert Debrief; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Aug70, p. 38; FLC Sheet, Subj: Shipping of Retrograde Materials, dtd 19Dec69, tab K-5, FLC ComdC, Jan70; Jones FLC Debrief, p. 1.

28. The CMC instruction is quoted in Jones Transctipt, p. 69, and 1stMarDiv Fact Sheet, Subj: Limited Technical Inspection of Retrograde Material, dtd 14Feb71, in 3d MAB Planning Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, pp. 67-70; Jones FLC Debrief; and Soper, "Logistics," pp. 208, 211.

29. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, p. 77, Mar-Apr71, p. 38; FLC Fact Sheet, Subj: Retrograde Facility, dtd 14Dec69, tab K-1, FLC ComdC, Jan70; News Clipping, Supply Bn ComdC, Feb71, in 1st FSR ComdC, Feb71.

30. FLSG-B ComdCs, Jan-Feb70, in FLC ComdCs, Jan-Feb70; FLC Bulletin 4235, dtd 7Mar70, tab Q, FLC ComdC, Mar70; Calvert Debrief; Supply Bn ComdC, Oct70, in 1st FSR ComdC, Oct70.

31. FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-Jun71, pp. 48-50; Jones Debrief and MajGen James R. Jones, comments on draft ms, 24Mar83 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter Jones Comments, 24Mar83.

32. Jones FLC Debrief; LtCol James F. Helsel intvw, 17Mar71, Tape 4989 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).

33. Padlino FMFPac Debrief; Jones FLC Debrief; Jones Comments, 24Mar83.

34. Supply Bn ComdC, Mar-Apr71, in 1st FSR ComdCs, Mar-Apr71; 3d MAB Fact Sheet, Subj: Transfer of Butler Buildings, dtd 2May71; III MAF ComdC, Jan71, p. 20; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan-Feb71, pp. 35-36, Mar-Apr71, p. 47, May-Jun71, pp. 49-50; Co A (Rein), 7th Engr Bn ComdC, 14-30Apr71.

35. Jones FLC Debrief and FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, p. 43, give the statistics and percentages.

36. Simlik intvw and Col Roy L. Reed debriefing at FMFPac, 14Aug70, Tape 4923, emphasize the amount of unserviceable equipment removed. Fails intvw describes the MAG-16 liaison arrangment. Jones Comments, 24Mar83.

37. Jones, 1971 Symposium Presentation announces the MO/MOA reconstruction.

38. III MAF OPlan 183-69, dtd 1Sep69, Anx E (Logistics), dtd 25Sep70, App 3; FLC Bulletin 4600, Subj: Instruction for the Medical and Agricultural Treatment and Processing Procedure in Force Logistic Command for Retrograde Vehicles and Material, dtd 14Apr70, tab L, FLC ComdC, Apr70; 1stMarDiv Bulletin 4600, dtd 5Jul70, tab B-3, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jul70; FLC Order P4032.1A, dtd 14Dec70, tab H, FLC ComdC, Dec70; Simlik intvw; Stien Debrief; Fails intvw.

39. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Mar-Apr71, pp. 37-38; 1st Engineer Bn ComdC, Sep70, Feb71.

40. Fails intvw; MAG-16 ComdC, Mar-Jun71.

41. Soper, "Logistics," pp. 205, 214-215; III MAF OPlan 183-69, Anx E (Logistics), dtd 25Sep69; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Apr70, p. 31, Dec70, pp. 65-66, Mar-Apr71, p. 36; PacFltOps Review, Jan70, p. 21, Feb70, pp. 22, 46, Mar70, pp. 17-18, Apr70, p. 22, Jul-Sep70, pp. 20-21, Oct-Dec70, p. 35, Jan-Mar71, p. 31. FMFPac Briefing Slides, n.d., in G-3 III MAF Keystone Robin File, 24Apr-9Dec70.

42. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec70, pp. 72-73; III MAF ComdC, Nov70, p. 20; 3d MAB Fact Sheet, Subj: Status of Real Property, dtd 2May71; Blue Debrief.

43. Wood Debrief.

44. Haggerty Debrief; MACV ComdHist, 1970, II pp. 36-40; LtGen James E. Sutherland, Jr., USA, Senior Officer Debriefing Report, period 18Jun70-9Jun71, dtd 31Aug71, pp. 21-22 (copy in MCHC). For an example of Vietnamese foot-dragging on an OP turnover, see CO, 1st Mar msg to CG1stMarDiv, dtd 19Feb71, 3/1 ComdC, Feb71; CG1stMarDiv msg to Co 1st Mar, dtd 1Mar71, 3/1 ComdC, Mar71; and 1st Mar msg to 1stMarDiv, dtd 10Apr71, 3/1 ComdC, 1-14Apr71.

45. Blue Debrief; CG1stMarDiv msg to Distribution List, dtd 8Feb71, 3d MAB Planning Notebook, 1stMarDiv Documents. For base turnovers, see III MAF ComdCs, Jul70-Apr71, and 3d MAB Fact Sheet, Subj: Status of Real Property, dtd 2May71.

46. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Sep70, p. 27, Mar-Apr71, p. 45; Maintenance Bn ComdC, Apr70-Apr71, in FSR ComdCs, Apr70-Apr71; 1st Engineer Bn ComdC, Feb71; Blue Debrief and Dixon Comments.

47. Armstrong Debrief.

PART VI
The Close of an Era

CHAPTER 20

MORALE AND DISCIPLINE

Unless otherwise noted, material in this chapter is drawn from FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jan70-May/Jun71; and III MAF, 1st MAW, 1st MarDiv, and FLC ComdCs, Jan70-Apr71. Extensive use has been made of the Leadership and Discipline Notebook (1stMarDiv Documents, MCHC), hereafter cited as L & D Notebook. Frequent use has been made of the following interviews and briefings, all in the Oral HistColl, MCHC: McCutcheon intvw; Armsttong intvw; and Armstrong Debrief.

A Time of Troubles

1. SgtMaj Edgar R. Huff, comments on draft ms, 25Jul83 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter Huff Comments.

Atrocities, Rules of Engagement, and Personal Reponse

Additional sources for this section are: HQMC Son Thang Incident Document File, hereafter cited as Son Thang File, with foldet

number. Extensive material has been drawn from: Guenter Lewy, *America in Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), hereafter Lewy, *America in Vietnam*; and Maj W. Hays Parks, "Crimes in Hostilities," *Marine Corps Gazatte*, Aug70, pp. 16-22, Sep76, pp. 33-39, hereafter Parks, "Crimes in Hostilities," with date and page numbers.

2. Unless otherwise noted, this account of the Son Thang incident is based on: HQMC Point Paper, Subj: Incident of 19Feb70 at Song Thang (4) . . . , dtd 2Mar70, Son Thang File, folder 1; Lewy, *America in Vietnam*, pp. 327-328; CGIIIMAF msg to CGFMFPac, dtd 25Feb70, FMFPac Message File; CG1stMarDiv msgs to CGFMFPac, dtd 27Feb70 and 15Dec70, and CG1stMarDiv msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 3Mar70, all in III MAF Message Files.

3. The initial false reports are in 1/7 Journal, 19Feb70, 1/7 ComdC, Feb70, and 7th Mar SitRep, dtd 19Feb70, 7th Mar ComdC, Feb70.

4. CG1stMarDiv msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 20Feb70, III MAF Message Files.

5. William T. Sherman, *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman*, 4th ed, 2 vols. (New York: Charles L. Webster and Co., 1891), vol 2, p. 194, see also pp. 174-175. For a detailed account of the Philippines incident, see Joseph L. Schott, *The Ordeal of Samar* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964). For allegations against Marines in the Dominican Republic, see Capt Stephen M. Fullet and Graham A. Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic, 1916-1924* (Washington: History and Museums Division, HQMC, 1974), pp. 32-33.

6. Lewy, *America in Vietnam*, p. 456, reprints these statistics from the Judge Advocate General, Military Justice Division, U.S. Department of the Navy. For earlier atrocity incidents and their disposition, see Jack Shulimson, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam, 1966, An Expanding War* (Washington: History and Museum Division, HQMC,), pp. 244-246; Philip Caputo, A Rumor of War (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982), ch. 17 recounts the legal proceedings against a Marine officer and several enlisted men charged with killing two Vietnamese civilians; in this case, the men were acquitted or charges were dropped.

7. Dulacki Comments.

8. Ibid. and Dulacki intvw, pp. 107-110; messages on the incident are in III MAF Outgoing Message Files, 14Jan-31Mar70, and Incoming Message Files, 13Feb-18Mar70; for declassification, see CGFMFPac msg to CG 1stMarDiv, dtd 23Aug70 and CG 1stMarDiv msg to CGFMFPac, dtd 24Aug70, III MAF Incoming Message files 29Jul-15Sep70.

9. 1/7 ComdC, Feb70; HQMC Point Paper, Subj: Incident of 19Feb70 at Son Thang (4) . . . , dtd 2Mar70, Son Thang File, folder 1.

10. Col Max G. Halliday, Head Military Law Branch, JAG, ltr to Mrs. Kenneth D. Coffin, dtd 19Mar70, Son Thang File, folder 1; this folder contains numerous protest letters, with answers worded essentially as the one cited.

11. This summary of the trials is based on III MAF Incoming Message Files, 19Mar-11May70, and Son Thang File, folders 2, 3, and 4.

12. CG1stMarDiv msg to CGFMFPac, dtd 21May70; CG1stMarDiv msg to CMC, dtd 7Jun70, III MAF Incoming Message Files, 19Mar-29Jul70.

13. 1stMarDiv Order P1500.31A, dtd 24Jan70, tab B-33, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jan70; CGIIIMAF msg to CMC, dtd 27Feb70, III MAF Outgoing Message Files, 14Jan-31Mar70; CGIIIMAF msg to CMC, dtd 4Mar70, III MAF Outgoing Message Files, 4Mar-13May70; CG1stMarDiv msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 3Mar70, III MAF Incoming Message Files, 13Feb-18Mar70; 1stMarDiv Order 03330.2B, dtd 6Dec69, tab B-6, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Dec69.

14. MajGen Widdecke msg to LtGen McCutcheon, dtd 28Apr70, III MAF Incoming Message Files, 19Mar-22May70; Lewy, *America in Vietnam*, pp. 366-367, discuss general deficiencies in U.S. Law of War training.

15. CGIIIMAF msg to III MAF, dtd 13May70, CGIIIMAF Personal/Official Correspondence File, Feb-Nov70.

16. CO 4th CAG msg to 4th CAG, dtd 16May70, 4th CAG ComdC, May70; see also CO 4th CAG Circular, Subj: Fire Discipline, dtd 23Apr70 in Ibid; and CAF Order 3300.1, dtd 17May70, in CAG SOP and History folder, Box 2, Pacification Study Docs.

17. 1stMarDiv msg to All Units, dtd 4Jan71, 1stMarDiv Jnl File, 1-10Jan71.

18. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Summary and Overview, p. 45; III MAF ComdCs, Jan-Dec70; *Sea Tiger*, 16Oct70, described the III MAF cultural tours.

19. 1stMarDiv Order 5710.8B, dtd 9Oct70, tab B-13, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Oct70; see also DivO 1050.4, dtd 3 Feb70, tab B-4, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Feb70. For an example of regimental Personal Response efforts, see 1st Mar ComdCs, Jan-Dec70; 3/5 ComdC, Apr70, p. 3-9, describes activities of a unit Personal Response Council.

20. CG1stMarDiv msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 21Jul70, III MAF Incoming Message Files, 22May-29Jul70; CGIIIMAF ltr to CG MR 1, dtd 16Aug70, CG IIIMAFPersonal/Official Correspondence File, Feb-Nov70.

'Friendly on Friendly'

Additional sources for this section are: Simmons Debrief and BGen Edwin H. Simmons, Orientation Talk to 1st Lieutenants, 1st Marine Division, n.d., ca. early 1971, hereafter Simmons Orientation Talk.

21. CG1stMarDiv msg to Distribution List, dtd 24Aug70, L&D Notebook; Simmons Orientation Talk, pp. 34, 38, 40, 43.

22. 3/7 ComdC, Aug70; CG1stMarDiv msgs to CGFMFPac, dtd 18Aug70, 21Aug70, 29Aug70, 16Sep70, III MAF Incoming Message Files, 29Jul-15Sep70, 16Sep-29Oct70.

23. 1st Mar ComdC, Oct70; 1st Mar SitRep, 12Oct70, in ibid., Simmons Orientation Talk, pp. 35-37; Col Lawrence R. Dorsa, comments on draft ms, 9Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File).

24. 1st Mar ComdC, Nov70; 3/1 ComdC, Nov70, pt. 3, sec A; Simmons Orientation Talk, pp. 37-38.

25. Grinalds intvw, pp. 119-120.

26. Col T. E. Metzger debriefing at FMFPac, 13Jul70, Tape 4899.

27. CG1stMarDiv msg to Distribution List, dtd 24Aug70, L&D Notebook; Simmons Orientation Talk, pp. 34-35, 40; Simmons Debrief; 1stMarDiv Order 5100.9B, dtd 8Nov70, tab B-11, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Nov70; Col Don D. Ezell debriefing at FMFPac, 8Apr70, Tape 4837, hereafter Ezell Debrief.

28. 1stMarDiv Order P5100.31A, dtd 24Jan70, tab B-33, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jan70; Col E. H. Waldrop debriefing at FMFPac, 19Aug70, Tape 4926; Ezell Debrief; 1stMarDiv O 3100.5, dtd 19Aug70, tab B-8, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Aug70.

29. CG1stMarDiv msg to Distribution List, dtd 24Aug70, L&D Notebook.

30. CGIIIMAF msg to 1stMarDiv, 1st MAW, FLC, 1st Radio Bn, 2d

CAG, Sub-Unit 1, 1st ANGLICO, dtd 21Oct70, L&D Notebook, summarizes the instructions previously in effect.
31. Ibid.
32. 1stMarDiv Order 5100.9B, dtd 8Nov70, tab B-11, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Nov70; CG1stMarDiv msg to Distribution List, dtd 6Jan71, L&D Notebook.
33. 1stMarDiv/3d MAB CG's Information Notebook, Apr71, in 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71, p. G-1-6.

The Challenge to Authority: Race, Drugs, Indiscipline

Additional sources for this section are: David Corttright, *Soldiers in Revolt: The American Military Today* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1975), hereafter Corttright, *Soldiers*; Charles C. Moskos, Jr., *The American Enlisted Man: The Rank and File in Today's Military* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1970), hereafter Moskos, *Enlisted Man*; and Henry I. Shaw, Jr., and Ralph W. Donnelly, *Blacks in the Marine Corps* (Washington: History and Museums Division, 1975), hereafter Shaw and Donnelly, *Blacks in the Marine Corps*. Extensive use has been made of the following oral history materials, all in the Oral HistColl, MCHC: LtGen William K. Jones intvw, 13Apr73, hereafter Jones intvw, Apr73; Col Neil E. Heffernan debriefing at FMFPac, 26Jun70, Tape 4890, hereafter Heffernan Debrief; Col Haywood R. Smith debriefing at FMFPac, 5Oct70, Tape 4970, hereafter Smith Debrief; Col Laurence J. Stien debriefing at FMFPac, 15Oct70, Tape 4973, hereafter Stien Debrief; Col Robert W. Teller debriefing at FMFPac, 13Jul70, Tape 4897, hereafter Teller Debtief; Fails intvw; Capt Ronald C. Hood, III, intvw, 3Mar79, Tape 6345, hereafter Hood intvw.

34. Corttright, *Soldier*, passim., is a detailed overview of military unrest, from a radical petspective. Lewy, *America in Vietnam*, pp. 158-161, approaches the situation from a more pto-military viewpoint.
35. Huff Comments.
36. MajGen Edwin D. Wheeler, Remarks to Marine Corps General Officers' Symposium, Jul71, tab E, 1971, General Officers' Symposium Book.
37. Simmons Orientation Talk, p. 14; George W. Ashworth, "Marine Corps Ponders Its Footing on Peacetime-Level Basis," *Christian Science Monitor*, 21 May70.
38. Gen Robert H. Barrow as quoted in *Saturday Review*, Jan 1980.
39. Dulacki Comments; Dulacki intvw, p. 106.
40. Fails intvw; see also Supply Bn, 1st FSR *Scuttlebutt*, 1Feb70, tab B, encl 1, 1st FSR ComdC, Jan70.
41. Fails intvw.
42. Moskos, *Enlisted Man*, p. 121.
43. 1stMarDiv Platoon Leader's Pamphlet, *The Racical Situation: Equality of Treatment and Opportunity*, DivO 5390.1, dtd 17Jan70 (copy in Racial Problems Folder, box 5, McCutcheon Papers), hereafter 1stMarDiv, *The Racial Situation*.
44. Shaw and Donnelly, *Blacks in the Marine Corps*, pp. 69-71; Majors A. S. Painter, G. S. St. Pierre, and H. C. Sweet, Jr., rept, Subj: Race Relations in the United States Marine Corps, dtd Jun70 (Negro Marines—Race Relations File RefSec); Senior Member Inquiry Team memo to CG Marine Corps Base, Camp Smedley D. Butler, Subj: Report of Racial Turbulence Inquiry, dtd 4Oct71 (News Releases/Miscellaneous Folder, "Blacks in the Marine Corps" Backup File).
45. Chapman is quoted in Shaw and Donnelly, *Blacks in the Marine Corps*, pp. 72-73.
46. CMC msg to ALMAR, dtd 2Sep69 (Negro Marines, ALMAR-65 Subject File, RefSec).
47. For examples of views critical of the permission of "Black Power" symbols, see Simmons Brief and GySgt Joe Lopez intvw, 21Feb70, Tape 4749, hereafter Lopez intvw.
48. Jones intvw, Apr 73, pp. 85-86.
49. Majors A. S. Painter, G. S. St. Pierre, and H. C. Sweet, Jr., rept, subj: Race Relations in the United States Marine Corps, dtd Jun70 (Negro Marines—Race Relations, RefSec).
50. 1stMarDiv Talking Paper, dtd 2Oct70, L&D Notebook; HQMC Summary of Significant Racial Incidents at Marine Corps Installations, Aug68-Nov71 (Negro Marines—Race Relations File, RefSec); CG1stMAW msgs to CGIIIMAF, dtd 29Dec70, 3, 4, and 7Jan71 (III MAF Incoming Message Files, 7Dec70-14Jan71).
51. McCutcheon intvw, pp. 13, 14, 16; consult also Simmons Debrief and Stien Debrief.
52. Stien Debrief.
53. Col Robert L. Parnell, Jr., debriefing at FMFPac, 3Aug70, Tape 4925, hereafter Parnell Debrief.
54. *Sea Tiger*, 16Oct70; quoted in Shaw and Donnelly, *Blacks in the Marine Corps*, pp. 77-78. See also McCutcheon intvw, p. 15.
55. 1stMarDiv, *The Racial Situation*. See also Simmons Orientation Talk, pp. 11-13; and 1stMarDiv Talking Paper, dtd 2Oct70, L&D Notebook.
56. 1stMarDiv Order 5420.1A, dtd 14Dec69, tab B-18, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Dec69.
57. LtCol Bernard E. Trainor, CO, 1st Recon Bn, ltr to CG1stMarDiv, n.d. circa. 1970-71 (Vietnam Comment File).
58. LtGen William K. Jones remarks to Marine Corps General Officers Symposium, Jul71, tab J, 1971 General Officers' Symposium Book. See also Simmons Orientation Talk, pp. 12-13; and CG1stMAW to CGFMFPac, dtd 30Aug70 (III MAF Incoming Message File, Aug-14Dec70).
59. 1stMarDiv Bulletin 5420, dtd 10Jan71, tab B-7, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Jan71; 1stMarDiv Order 5420.1B, dtd 15Feb71, tab B-3, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Feb71.
60. FLC Order 1500.6, dtd 13Mar70, tab N and FLC Order 5350.1, dtd 21Mar70, tab R, both in FLC ComdC, Mar70.
61. LCdr James G. Goode, CHC, USN, intvw, 3Jul70, Tape 4935, hereafter Goode intvw; Cdr James G. Goode, CHC, USN, comments on draft ms, 28Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter Goode Comments.
62. Heffernan Debrief; Smith Debrief; Stien Debrief; Teller Debrief; Hood intvw.
63. Col Theodore E. Metzget, comments on draft ms, 22Mar83 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter Metzger Comments.
64. Smith Debrief.
65. Col Edward A. Wilcox debriefing at FMFPac, 4Jul70, Tape 4889, hereafter Wilcox Debrief.
66. Stien Debrief.
67. Hood intvw.
68. McCutcheon intvw, p. 15. For background on SgtMaj Huff, see Shaw and Donnelly, *Blacks in the Marine Corps*, pp. 79-80.
69. CG1stMAW msg to CGFMFPac, dtd 30Aug70 (III MAF Incoming Message Files, Aug-14Dec70).
70. Huff Comments.
71. Hood intvw.
72. 1stMarDiv/3d MAB CG's Information Notebook, Apr71, in 3d

MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71, p. G-1-5g; Simmons Debrief.
73. Huff Comments.
74. Armstrong Debrief.
75. Goode Comments.
76. 1stMarDiv Platoon Leader's Pamphlet, *The Drug Problem*, tab B-9, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Mar71, passim., hereafter *The Drug Problem*; 1stMarDiv Talking Paper, dtd 2Oct70, L&D Notebook; Dulacki intvw, pp. 103-104; Hood intvw.
77. Simmons Debrief; Armstrong Debrief.
78. Teller Debrief; Capt Jerry K. Taylor intvw, 29Mar71, Tape 4997. For views on the U.S. origin of the Vietnam military drug problem consult: Armstrong intvw, p. 48; Dulacki intvw, pp. 98-102.
79. CGIIIMAF msgs to CGFMFPac, dtd 31Aug70 and 11Sep70; CGIIIMAF msg to CMC, dtd 12Jan71 (III MAF Outgoing Message Files, 3Aug70-24Jan71); III MAF ComdCs, Aug70, Sep70, Jan71.
80. *The Drug Problem*; 1stMarDiv Bulletin 6710, dtd 28Mar71, tab B-B-13; 1stMarDiv ComdC, Mar71; FLC Order P6710, dtd 13Dec70, tab F, FLC ComdC, Dec70; *Sea Tiger*, 11Sep70.
81. Simmons Orientation Talk, p. 16.
82. CGFMFPac msg to FMFPac, dtd 27Aug70, L&D Notebook, describes basic drug policy. See also: Armstrong Debrief; Maj I. W. Neely intvw, 21Feb70, Tape 4748, hereafter Neely intvw, describes one unit's efforts to break up drug-using groups of Marines.
83. Hood intvw.
84. For the 4th Division amnesty, see *Washington Post*, 23Jul70, p. 1. The DOD drug task force recommendations are summarized in *Sea Tiger*, 2Oct70, and in *U.S. News and World Report*, 31Aug70, p. 26. Marines occasionally voluntarily turned themselves in for drug treatment; see Maintenance Bn ComdC, Apr70, in 1st FSR ComdC, Apr70.
85. This message is quoted in Simmons Orientation Talk, pp. 17-18.
86. CG1stMarDiv msg to CGIIIMAF, dtd 19Oct70 (III MAF Incoming Message Files, 16Sep-29Oct70); CGIIIMAF msg to CG1stMarDiv, dtd 22OCt70 (III MAF Outgoing Message Files, Aug-14Dec70.)
87. Col Hugh S. Aitkens debriefing at FMFPac, 4Mar71, Tape 5007, hereafter Aitken Debrief.
88. Armstrong intvw, pp. 46-49, see also p. 24; Armstrong Debrief; MAG-16 Group Chaplain ComdC, Feb71, in MAG-16 ComdC, Feb71.
89. Stien Debrief describes handling of a radical agitator in MAG-13. Wilcox Debrief deals with combat refusals in the 1st Marines. For general disciplinary problems, see: Goode intvw; Lopez intvw; Col Donald E. Morin intvw, 13Aug70, Tape 4909; Capt John S. Papa intvw, 24Feb70, Tape 4750, hereafter Papa intvw.
90. Gen Leonard F. Chapman, remarks to 1970 General Officers' Symposium; BGen R. G. Carney, Jr., presentation to 1970 General Officers' Symposium; both in 1970 General Officers' Symposium Book. See also CG3dMarDiv msg to 3dMarDiv, ca. May69 in LtGen William K. Jones Intvw Backup File (OralHistColl, MCHC), hereafter CG3dMarDiv msg, ca. May69; 1stMarDiv Bulletin 1900, dtd 7Oct70, tab B-6, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Oct70; 1stMarDiv/3d MAB CG's Information Notebook, Apr71, in 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71.
91. Papa intvw. See also Aitken Debrief; Simmons Debrief.

'Fragging' and Operation Freeze

92. 1stMarDiv/3d MAB CG's Information Notebook, Apr71, in 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71.
93. Cottright, *Soldiers*, pp. 46-47, for example, calls fragging an essential tool of soldier democracy.
94. Division statistics are in 1stMarDiv/3d MAB CG's Information Notebook, Apr71, p. G-1-5h, in 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71. For the Maintenance Battalion incident, see Maintenance Bn ComdC, Feb70, in 1st FSR ComdC, Feb70; and McCutcheon intvw, p. 16. USARV statistics are summarized in Lewy, *America in Vietnam*, p. 156.
95. 1stMarDiv/3d MAB CG's Information Notebook, Apr71, p. G-1-5h, in 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71; Simmons Orientation Talk, pp. 27-8.
96. Simmons Orientation Talk, pp. 29-30, 33; Papa intvw; Jones intvw, pp. 44-47, 49-50. For an obviously drug-related attempted fragging, see 1st MP Bn ComdC, Jan71, p. 11. The intended victim in this case was the handler of a dog trained to sniff out marijuana.
97. Jones intvw, pp. 40-42; Maintenance Bn ComdC, Mar70, in 1st FSR ComdC, Mar70; and *Washington Post*, 16Jun70, p. 15, cover the outcome of the Maintenance Battalion fragging investigation.
98. Jones intvw, pp. 40-42, 47, 83; CG3dMarDiv msg, ca. May69.
99. For typical Operation Freeze order, see 2/5 Order 3120.1 dtd 8Sep70, in 2/5 ComdC, Sep70; Simmons Orientation Talk, p. 29.
100. CGFMFPac msg to FMFPac, dtd 13Nov70; CG1stMarDiv msg to 1stMarDiv, dtd 15Nov70, L&D Notebook; 1stMarDiv Order 5830.2, dtd 19Dec70, tab B-17, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Dec70.
101. 1stMarDiv Order 5830.1, dtd 13Dec70, tab B-15, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Dec70; Simmons Debrief.
102. 1stMarDiv/3d MAB CG's Information Notebook, Apr71, p. G-1-5h, in 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71.

Training and Morale-Building

103. 3/5 Jnl, 2May70, in 3/5 ComdC, May70; in the same vein, see CO, 1st Mar msg to 1st Mar, dtd 25Dec70, tab 4-30, 2/1 ComdC, Dec70.
104. Wilcox Debrief. For similar views, see BGen Charles S. Robertson debriefing at FMFPac, 2Feb70, Tape 4797; and Col Herbert L. Wilkerson debriefing at FMFPac, 13Jul70, Tape 4892.
105. Col James E. Hartell, comments on draft ms, 16Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File).
106. 1st MarDiv Order P1500.31A, dtd 24Jan70, tab B-33, 1st MarDiv ComdC, Jan70, outlines the division training objectives and methods. For regimental training efforts see 1st, 5th, 7th, and 11th Mar ComdCs, for 1970 and 1971.
107. 3/1 ComdC, Apr70, p. 14.
108. Supply Bn ComdC, Jan70, in 1st FSR ComdC, Jan70.
109. Parnell Debrief; III MAF ComdC, Feb70, p 14.
110. Wilcox Debrief; III MAF ComdCs, Jan70-Feb71.
111. 1stMarDiv ComdC, Feb70, p. 1st MAW ComdC, Jan70; 1st FSR ComdC, Jan70.
112. 2/1 ComdC, Sep70, pt. 2, sec A. For a description of similar facilities in FLSG-B, consult Neely intvw.
113. Col William V. H. White, comments on draft ms, 16Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File).
114. 1st MarDiv, 1st MAW, and FLC ComdCs, 1970-1971; Col Edmund G. Derning Jr., debriefing at FMFPac, 10Aug70, Tape 4958, hereafter Derning Debrief.
115. 1stMarDiv Order 1710.10D, dtd 11May68, tab B-6, 1st MarDiv ComdC, May68, lays out basic 1stMarDiv R&R procedures. See also 1stMarDiv Order 1710.10E, Change 2, dtd 11Dec69, tab B-15, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Dec69; and 1st MarDiv Div Bulletin 1710, dtd 28Mar70, tab B-30, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Mar70. Supply Bn procedures are in *Scuttlebutt*, 1Feb70, Supply Bn ComdC, Jan70, in 1st

FSR ComdC, Jan70. Rocket R&R is recalled in Simmons, "Marine Operations, 1969-1972," pp. 142-143.
116. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Nov68, pp. 54-55; IIJ MAF ComdCs, Jan-Jun70.
117. 1st MarDiv Order 1710.2b, dtd 22Jan70, tab B-30, 1st MarDiv ComdC, Jan70.
118. 1stMarDiv Order 1710.14A, dtd 25Feb70, tab B-24, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Feb70. For comment on the program, consult Wilcox Debrief and MajGen Ormond R. Simpson debriefing at FMFPac, 15Dec69, Tape 4695.
119. Derning Debrief; See also Col Edmund G. Derning, taped comments on draft ms, 25Jul83 (Otal HistColl, MCHC).
120. 1stMarDiv Order 1050.4, dtd 3Feb70, tab B-4, 1stMarDiv ComdC, Feb70.
121. 3d MAB Bulletin 11240, dtd 29Apr71, tab A-4, 3d MAB ComdC, 14-30Apr71; CORDS Da Nang City Advisory Group rept for period ending 30Apr71, dtd 5May71 (U.S. Army Center of Military History).
122. CGFMFPac msg to FMFPac, dtd 20Nov70; CMC msg to all General Officers and all Commanding Officers, dtd 7Dec70; L&D Notebook.
123. LtGen Donn J. Robertson intvw, 24Apr73, pp. 56-57; FLC Bulletin 1740, dtd 23Nov70, tab H, FLC ComdC, Nov70.
124. Armstrong Debrief.

Cohesion or Disintegration?

125. McCutcheon intvw, p. 16.
126. Stien Debrief.
127. Huff Comments.
128. Wilcox Debrief; for another basically favorable view of the Marines serving in Vietnam, see Simmons Orientation Talk, pp. 3-4.

CHAPTER 21

U.S. MARINE ADVISORS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

U.S. Marine Advisors and the Vietnamese Marine Corps

Unless otherwise noted material in this section is drawn from SMA Monthly Historical Summaries, hereafter SMA HistSum and date; FMFPac, MarOpsV, 1970-71; MACV ComdHist, 70 and 71.

1. FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-Jun71, pp. 34-36; SMA HistSum Jan1970; Col Richard F. Armstrong, comments on draft ms, n.d., and LtCol Pieter L. Hogaboom, comments on draft ms, 10Jun83 (Vietnam Comment File); see also SMA, "VNMC/MAU Historical Summary, 1954-1973," a concise history of the VNMC and MAU.
2. MACV ComdHist, 70, II, ch. 7, pp. 9-10.
3. FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-Jun71, pp. 38-43.
4. Ibid., p. 40.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., pp. 42-43.
7. Ibid., p. 43.
8. SMA HistSum, Jan70.
9. SMA HistSum, 15 and 22May70; Col Richard F. Armstrong, comments on draft ms, n.d. (Vietnam Comment File). For general background also see BGen Trau Dinh Tho, *The Cambodia Incursion* (Washington: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1979).
10. SMA HistSum, 29May and 5Jun70; Col Edward O. Bierman, comments on draft ms, 22Jul83 (Vietnam Comment File).
11. SMA HistSum, 19Jun70.
12. SMA HistSum, Jul and Aug70.
13. SMA Lam Son 719 CAAR, Mar71, hereafter cited as Lam Son 719 CAAR.

The Vietnamese Marine Corps in Lam Son 719

14. For general background on Lam Son 719 see MACV ComdHist, 71, II, Anx E; XXIV Corps Lam Son 719 AAR; and MajGen Nguyen Duy Hinh, *Lam Son 719* (Washington: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1979), hereafter Hinh, *Lam Son 719*.
15. LtCol Marshall N. Cartet, comments on draft ms, 28Mar83 (Vietnam Comment File).
16. SMA HistSum, Mar71.
17. SMA HistSum, Mar71; Hinh, *Lam Son 719*, pp. 93-96.
18. Lam Son 719 CAAR; SMA HistSum, Mar71.
19. BGen Alexander P. McMillan, comments on draft ms, 19Apr71 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter McMillan Comments; Lam Son 719 CAAR.
20. BGen Francis W. Tief, comments on draft ms, 13Apr83 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter Tief Comments.
21. McMillan Comments.
22. Tief Comments.
23. Lam Son 719 CAAR; Tief Comments.
24. SMA HistSum 19-25 Mar 1917; Lam Son 719 CAAR,
25. Lam Son 719 CAAR; SMA memo for the Admiral, dtd 26Mar71.
26. Lam Son 719 CAAR.
27. Ibid.

The Marine Advisory Unit and Solid Anchor

Additional sources for this section are SMA HistSums, 1970-71; SMA G-3 Advisor Solid Anchor Chronology and Comment, hereafter G-3 Advisor Report; Asst G-3 Advisor Recollection of Solid Anchor, hereafter Carter Report.

28. G-3 Advisor Report.
29. VAdm Jerome H. King, comments on draft ms, 10Jun83 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter King Comments.
30. Carter Report; G-3 Advisor Report.
31. NavForV, Monthly HistSum, Dec 1970.
32. G-3 Advisor Report; Carter Report.
33. Ibid.
34. NavForV, Monthly HistSum, Dec 1970.
35. King Comments.
36. Tief Comments.
37. Carter Report.
38. G-3 Advisor Report; Tief Comments; Carter Report.
39. Ibid.
40. Carter Report.
41. Tief Comments.
42. G-3 Advisor Report.
43. G-3 Advisor Report; Tief Comments; Carter Report.
44. King Comments.

Sub-Unit 1, 1st Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company

Additional sources for this section are: FMFPac, MarOpsV, 1970-71, and Sub-Unit 1, 1st ANGLICO, ComdCs, 1970-71, hereafter SU-1 ComdC and date.

45. FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-Jun71, pp. 23-24.
46. SU-1 ComdC, Jan70; FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-Jun71.
47. FMFPac, MarOpsV, May-Jun71.
48. SU-1 ComdC, Feb70.
49. SU-1 ComdC, Mar70.
50. SU-1 ComdC, Jul70; FMFPac, MarOpsV, Jul70, pp. 30-31.
51. SU-1 ComdC, Aug 1970.
52. SU-1 ComdC, Jan70-Jun71.

The Special Landing Force

53. FMFPac, MarOpsV, Dec69, CinCPac ComdHist, 1970; 26th Marines ComdC, Sep69.
54. 9th Mar ComdCs, 70-71; 31st MAU ComdCs, 70-71.
55. TG 79.4/SLF Alpha ComdC, Aug70.
56. 31st MAU ComdC, Jan71; ComUSMACV msg to ComSeventhFlt, dtd 30Jan71 in 31st MAU ComdC, Jan71.
57. CTG 79.4 msg to CTF 76, dtd 6Feb71 in 31st MAU ComdC, Feb71.
58. 31st MAU ComdC, Feb-Mar71.
59. MajGen A. H. Jones msg to LtGen W. K. Jones, dtd 23Apr71, LtGen W. K. Jones msg to MajGen A. J. Armstrong, dtd 22May71, and LtGen W. K. Jones msg to LtGen D. Robertson, dtd 24Apr71, all in FMFPac Message Files, Jan-May71; 31st MAU ComdC, May71.
60. Ibid.
61. CTG 79.4 msg to 1stBn, 9th Mar, and HMM-164, dtd 20May71 and CTG 76.4 msg to AIG 461, dtd 24May71, in 31st MAU ComdC, May71.
62. LtGen W. K. Jones msg to MGen A. J. Armstrong, dtd 22May71, FMFPac Message Files, Jan-Jun71.
63. MajGen Alan J. Armstrong intvw, 2Oct73, p. 46 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).

Marines on the MACV Staff

64. Status of Forces (SOF), Jan-Jun70.
65. SOF 1966-71.
66. Col Verle E. Ludwig, telephone intvw, 10Apr84, hereafter Ludwig intvw.
67. Col Jack W. Dindinger, comments on draft ms, 28Mar83 (Vietnam Comment File), hereafter Dindinger Comments.
68. Col Richard H. Rainforth debriefing at FMFPac, 20Aug70 (Oral HistColl, MCHC).
69. Ludwig intvw.
70. Dindinger Comments.

Embassy Marines

71. Co E MSG Bn ComdC Jan-Jun70.
72. Maj Edward J. Land, Jr., comments on draft ms, 31May83 (Vietnam Comment File); Co E MSG Bn, ComdC, Jan70-Jun71.
73. Co E MSG Bn, ComdC, Jan-Aug70.
74. Co E MSG Bn, ComdC, Jan-Jun71.
75. Co E MSG Bn, ComdC, Dec70-Apr71.
76. Co E MSG Bn, ComdC, Mar-Jun71; Co C MSG Bn, ComdC, Apr75.

Appendix A

Marine Command and Staff List January 1970-June 1971

III MAF Headquarters, 1Jan70-14Apr71

CG LtGen Herman Nickerson, Jr.	1Jan-9Mar70
LtGen Keith B. McCutcheon	9Mar-23Dec70
LtGen Donn J. Robertson	24Dec70-14Apr71
DepCG MajGen George S. Bowman, Jr.	1Jan-9Mar70
DepCG (Ground) MajGen Edwin B. Wheeler	1Jan-26Apr70
MajGen Charles F. Widdecke	27Apr70-14Apr71
DepCG (Air) MajGen William G. Thrash	1Jan-30Jun70
MajGen Alan J. Armstrong	1Jul70-14Apr71
C/S BGen Leo J. Dulacki	1Jan-15Jun70
BGen Thomas H. Miller, Jr.	16Jun-9Dec70
BGen William G. Joslyn	10Dec70-14Apr71
DepC/S Col Sam A. Dressin	1Jan-2Sep70
Col Robert W. Kersey	3-27Sep70
Col Eugene H. Haffey	28Sep70-14Apr71
DepC/S Plans Col James A. Sloan	1-13Jan70
Col John R. Thurman, III, USA	14Jan-9Mar70
G-1 Col Robert L. Parnell, Jr.	1Jan-31Jul70
Col Lavern J. Oltmer	1Aug70-14Apr71
G-2 Col Edward W. Dzialo	1Jan-30Jun70
Col Forest J. Hunt	1Jul70-14Apr71
G-3 BGen Thomas H. Miller, Jr.	1Jan-15Jun70
Col Herbert L. Wilkerson	16Jun-8Jul70
Col Charles H. Ludden	9Jul70-14Apr71
G-4 Col Wilbur F. Simlik	1Jan-4Jun70
Col Allan T. Wood	5Jun-23Nov70
Col Kenneth McLennan	24Nov-18Dec70
Col Warren E. McCain	19Dec70-14Apr71
G-5 Col Clifford J. Peabody	1Jan-4Sep70
Maj Donald E. Sudduth	5Sep70-8Jan71
Col William L. McCulloch	9-19Jan71
Maj Donald E. Sudduth	20Jan-14Apr71

Headquarters & Service Company

CO/III MAF Headquarters Commandant

Col Frank X. Hoff	1Jan-15Jun70
LtCol James C. Klinedinst	16Jun-11Nov70
LtCol William J. Spiesel	12Nov70-14Apr71

1st Marine Division Headquarters, 1Jan70-14Apr71

CG MajGen Edwin B. Wheeler	1Jan-26Apr70
MajGen Charles F. Widdecke	27Apr70-14Apr71
ADC BGen Charles S. Robertson	1-31Jan70
BGen William F. Doehler	1Feb-15Jun70
BGen Edwin H. Simmons	16Jun70-14Apr71
C/S Col Charles E. Walker	1Feb-27Feb70
Col Noble L. Beck	28Feb-12Jul70
Col Eugene H. Haffey	13Jul-26Sep70
Col Don H. Blanchard	27Sep70-14Apr71
DepC/S Col Hugh S. Aitken	4Feb-28Feb70
G-1 Col Robert E. Barde	1Jan-31Aug70
Col Hugh S. Aitken	1Sep70-3Feb71
Col William M. Herrin, Jr.	4Feb-14Apr71
G-2 Col Edward A. Wilcox	1Jan-9Feb70
LtCol Charles M. Mosher	10Feb-25Mar70
Col Clarence W. Boyd, Jr.	26Mar-29Jul70
Col Albert C. Smith, Jr.	30Jul70-14Apr71
G-3 Col Floyd H. Waldrop	1Jan-18Aug70
Col Don H. Blanchard	19Aug-26Sep70
Col Ralph F. Estey	27Sep-30Nov70
Col Leon N. Utter	1Dec70-14Apr71
G-4 Col Nicholas A. Canzona	1Jan-27Feb70
Col Miller M. Blue	28Feb70-1Feb71
Col William L. McCulloch	2Feb-14Apr71
G-5 LtCol Vincent A. Albers, Jr	1Jan-31Jan70
Col Louis S. Hollier, Jr.	1Feb70-1Jan71
Col Richard B. Baity	2Jan-14Jan71

Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division

CO Col William C. Patton	1Jan-22Mar70
Col John H. Keith, Jr.	23Mar-30Jun70
Col Edwin M. Young	1Jul-15Dec70
Col William M. Herrin, Jr.	16Dec70-3Feb71
Col George M. Bryant	4Feb-3Apr71
LtCol Robert E. Wehrle	4-14Apr71

1st Marines

CO Col Herbert L. Wilkerson	1Jan-9Feb70
Col Edward A. Wilcox	10Feb-28Jun70
Col Paul X. Kelley	29Jun70-9May71

1st Battalion, 1st Marines

CO LtCol Godfrey S. Delcuze	1Jan-15Mar70
LtCol Charles G. Little	16Mar-8Jul70
LtCol Robert P. Rose	9Jul70-3May71

2d Battalion, 1st Marines

CO LtCol William William V. H. White	1Jan-15May70
LtCol William G. Leftwich, Jr.	16May-12Sep70
LtCol Donald J. Norris	13Sep70-13Mar71
LtCol Roy E. Moss	14Mar-19May71

3d Battalion, 1st Marines

CO LtCol Thomas P. Ganey	1-9Jan70
LtCol Frank M. Boyd	10Jan-18May70
Maj Pierre L. LeFevre	19-24May70
LtCol William M. Yeager	25May-17Sep70
LtCol Marc A. Moore	18Sep70-3May71

5th Marines

CO Col Noble L. Beck	1Jan-10Feb70
Col Ralph F. Estey	11Feb-26Jun70
Col Clark V. Judge	27Jun70-25Mar71

1st Battalion, 5th Marines

CO LtCol Joseph K. Griffis, Jr.	1Jan-14Feb70
LtCol Cornelius F. Savage, Jr.	15Feb-28Aug70
LtCol Bernard E. Trainor	29Aug-19Nov70
LtCol Franklin A. Hart, Jr.	20Nov70-16Apr71

2d Battalion, 5th Marines

CO LtCol James T. Bowen	1-13Jan70
LtCol Frederick D. Leder	14Jan-25Jul70
LtCol Thomas M. Hamlin	26Jul70-22Mar71

3d Battalion, 5th Marines

CO LtCol Johan S. Gestson	1Jan-6Apr70
LtCol William R. Kepart	7-14Apr70 (Acting)
LtCol Johan S. Gestson	15Apr-17Aug70
LtCol Herschel L. Johnson, Jr.	18Aug70-14Mar71

7th Marines

CO Col Gildo S. Codispoti	1Jan-28Feb70
Col Edmund G. Derning, Jr.	1Mar-4Aug70
Col Robert H. Piehl	5Aug-1Oct70

1st Battalion, 7th Marines

CO LtCol Frank A. Clark	1-15Jan70
LtCol Charles G. Cooper	16Jan-25Jul70
LtCol Theophil P. Riegert	26Jul-18Sep70
Maj John J. Sheridan	19-22Sep70

2d Battalion, 7th Marines

CO LtCol Arthur E. Folsom	1Jan-9Apr70
LtCol Vincent A. Albers, Jr.	10Apr-12Oct70

3d Battalion, 7th Marines

CO LtCol Ray G. Kummerow	1-30Jan70
LtCol Gerald C. Thomas, Jr.	31Jan-27Jun70
LtCol Kenneth L. Robinson, Jr.	28Jun-5Sep70
LtCol Franklin A. Hart, Jr.	6Sep-10Oct70
Maj Daniel J. O'Connor	11Oct-13Oct70

11th Marines

CO Col Don D. Ezell	1Jan-24Mar70
Col Ernest R. Reid, Jr.	25Mar-30Aug70
Col Edwin M. Rudzis	31Aug-28Mar71

1st Battalion, 11th Marines

CO LtCol John D. Shoup	1Jan-13Feb70
LtCol Lawrence R. Dorsa	14Feb-11Aug70
LtCol Gene H. Martin	12Aug-2Dec70
LtCol Bruce F. Ogden	3Dec70-13May71

2d Battalion, 11th Marines

CO LtCol Vonda Weaver	1Jan-23Mar70
LtCol Donald C. Stanton	24Mar-14Jul70
Maj George W. Ryhanych	15Jul-2Nov70
Maj Carlos K. McAfee	3Nov70-21Mar71

3d Battalion, 11th Marines

CO LtCol Karl N. Mueller	1Jan-6Apr70
LtCol David K. Dickey	7Apr-12Oct70

4th Battalion, 11th Marines

CO LtCol James F. Burke, Jr.	1Jan-2Apr70
LtCol Vaughn L. DeBoever	3Apr-9Oct70

1st Battalion, 13th Marines

CO LtCol Donald H. Strain	1Jan-19Feb70
LtCol Harold Schofield	20Feb-19Mar70

26th Marines

CO Col James E. Hartell	1Jan-19Mar70

1st Battalion, 26th Marines

CO LtCol James C. Goodin	1-12Jan70
LtCol Arnold J. Ort	13Jan-16Mar70
Maj Joseph F. Flynn	17-19Mar70

2d Battalion, 26th Marines

CO LtCol William C. Drumright	1-26Jan70
Maj Donald L. Humphrey	27Jan-19Mar70

3d Battalion, 26th Marines

CO LtCol John J. Unterkofler	1Jan-15Mar70
LtCol Gayle F. Twyman	16-19Mar70

1st Reconnaissance Battalion

CO LtCol John J. Grace	1-26Jan70
LtCol William C. Drumright	27Jan-10Aug70
LtCol Edmund J. Regan, Jr.	11Aug-12Sep70
LtCol William G. Leftwich, Jr.	12Sep-18Nov70
LtCol Bernard E. Trainor	19Nov70-25Mar71

1st Engineer Battalion

CO Maj Walter M. Winoski	1-30Jan70
LtCol Walter F. Glowicki	31Jan-31Dec70
LtCol Daryl E. Benstead	1Jan-31Mar71

7th Engineer Battalion

CO LtCol William G. Bates	1Jan-6Aug70
Maj Richard Gleeson	7-24Aug70

9th Engineer Battalion

CO LtCol Edward K. Maxwell	1Jan-22Feb70
LtCol John P. Kraynak	23Feb-24Aug70

1st Shore Party Battalion

CO LtCol Richard F. Armstrong	1Jan-11Mar70

1st Motor Transport Battalion

CO LtCol Morris S. Shimanoff	1Jan-2Jun70
LtCol Joseph J. Louder	3Jun-15Sep70
LtCol Charles A. Rosenfeld	16Sep-23Oct70
LtCol Robert E. Burgess	24Oct-6Dec70
LtCol Richard B. Talbott	7Dec70-22Mar71
Maj Joseph A. Galizio	23Mar-31Mar71

11th Motor Transport Battalion

CO LtCol William R. Kephart	1Jan-14Feb70
LtCol Richard L. Prather	15Feb-26May70
Maj William H. Walters	27-31May70
LtCol Alan D. Albert, Jr.	1Jun-24Oct70
LtCol Charles A. Rosenfeld	25Oct70-23Apr71

1st Tank Battalion

CO Maj Joseph J. Louder	1Jan-15Mar70

1st Medical Battalion

CO Capt James W. Lea, USN	1Jan-12Jun70
Capt Thomas R. Turner, USN	13Jun-19Jul70
Cdr William A. Elliot, USN	20Jul70-14Apr71

1st Hospital Company

CO Capt G. R. Hart, USN	1Jan-26Feb70

1st Dental Company

CO Capt Perry C. Alexander, USN	1Jan-2Mar70
Capt Merideth H. Mead, USN	3Mar-5Oct70

3d Amphibian Tractor Battalion

CO LtCol David G. Mehargue	1-28Jan70

1st Force Reconnaissance Company

CO Maj William H. Bond, Jr.	2Mar-3Jun70
Maj Dale D. Dorman	4Jun-4Aug70
Capt Norman B. Centers	5-19Aug70

1st Marine Aircraft Wing (1st MAW)

CG MajGen William G. Thrash	1Jan-30Jun70
MajGen Alan J. Armstrong	1Jul-14Apr71
AWC BGen Ralph H. Spanjer	1Jan-4May70
BGen Robert F. Conley	5May-7Aug70
BGen William R. Quinn	30Aug70-14Apr71
C/S Col Robert W. Teller	1Jan-30Jun70
Col Jack R. Sloan	1Jul-14Apr71
G-1 Col Grover S. Stewart, Jr.	1Jan-15Feb70
Col Paul B. Henley	16Feb-11Jul70
Col Donald Conroy	12Jul70-14Apr71
G-2 Col James R. Weaver	1-23Jan70
Col Jerry J. Mitchell	24Jan-31Jan70
Col Walter E. Sparling	1Feb-15Apr70
Col Jerry J. Mitchell	16Apr-5Oct70
Maj Joseph G. Roman	6Oct-8Nov70
Maj Eric J. Coady	9Nov70-24Feb71
Col Vernon Clarkson, Jr.	25Feb-14Apr71
G-3 Col Robert L. LaMar	1Jan-18May70
Col Walter E. Sparling	19May-6Nov70
Col Rex C. Denny, Jr.	7Nov70-14Apr71
G-4 Col William C. McGraw, Jr.	1Jan-2Jul70
LtCol John M. Dean	3Jul-27Jul70
Col Boris J. Frankovic	28Jul70-28Feb71
Col Dellwyn L. Davis, Jr.	1Mar-14Apr71

Marine Wing Headquarters Group 1 (MWHG-1)

CO Col Laurence J. Stien	1Jan-11May70
LtCol William R. Smith	14May-5Mar71
LtCol Gordon H. Buckner II	6Mar-14Apr71
LtCol Paul S. Frappollo	15Apr-30Jun71

Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron 1 (H&HS-1)

CO LtCol Henry F. Witter	1Jan-6Feb70
Maj William S. Humbert III	7Feb-31Jul70

Maj Fred J. Cone	1Aug-28Dec70
Maj Louis F. Gagon	29Dec70-14Apr71
LtCol Paul S. Frappollo	15Apr-16May71
Maj Thomas P. Kirland	17May-30Jun71

Marine Wing Support Group 1 (MWSG-1)

CO Col Laurence J. Srien	1Jan-11May70
LtCol William R. Smith	12May70-5Mar71
LtCol Gordon H. Buckner, II	6Mar-14Apr71

Marine Wing Communications Squadron 1 (MWCS-1)

CO Maj Allen B. Ray	1Jan-5Jun70
Maj Andy J. Sibley	6Jun-3Dec70
Maj Richard S. Kaye	4Dec-30Jun71

Marine Wing Facilities Squadron 1 (MWFS-1)

CO LtCol Norbert F. Schnippel, Jr.	1Jan-12Mar70
Maj William E. Dodds	13Mar-8Jul70
Maj Billy G. Phillips	9Jul-16Nov70
Maj James R. Griffin	17Nov-30Jun71

Marine Aircraft Group 16 (MAG-16)

CO Col James P. Bruce	1Jan-6Mar70
Col Haywood R. Smith	8Mar-3Oct70
Col Lewis C. Street III	4Oct70-21Jun71

Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron 16 (H&MS-16)

CO Maj Malcolm T. Hornsby, Jr.	1Jan-14Feb70
LtCol Wyman U. Blakeman	15Feb-26Mar70
LtCol Robert P. Guay	27Mar-5Jul70
Maj Franklin A. Gulledge, Jr.	6Jul-11Aug70
LtCol Clifford E. Reese	12Aug-21Oct70
Maj James M. Perryman, Jr.	22Oct-23Nov70
Maj Charles H. Pitman	24Nov70-25Feb71
Maj Con D. Silard, Jr.	26Feb-15Jun71
Maj Dennis R. Bowen	16Jun-20Jun71

Marine Air Base Squadron 16 (MABS-16)

CO LtCol Peter C. Scaglione, Jr.	1Jan-25Feb70
LtCol Charles R. Dunbaugh	26Feb-28May70
LtCol Louis K. Keck	29May-25Jul70
Maj Peter E. Benet	26Jul-8Nov70
LtCol John M. Dean	9Nov70-20Apr71
LtCol David A. Spurlock	21Apr-15Jun71
Maj Carmine W. DePietro	16-20Jun71

Marine Light Helicopter Squadron 167 (HML-167)

CO LtCol John E. Weber, Jr.	1Jan-8Apr70
LtCol Douglas A. McCaughey, Jr.	9Apr-4Dec70
LtCol Richard J. Blanc	5Dec70-10Jun71

Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 263 (HMM-263)

CO LtCol Walter R. Ledbetter, Jr.	1Jan-19Feb70
LtCol Earnest G. Young	20Feb-25Jul70
LtCol Louis K. Keck	26Jul70-26Mar71
Maj Dennis N. Anderson	27Mar-15May71

Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 361 (HMH-361)

CO LtCol Charles A. Block	1Jan-6Jan70
Maj Richard A. Govoni	7Jan-28Jan70

Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364 (HMM-364)

CO LtCol Charles R. Dunbaugh	1Jan-24Feb70
LtCol Peter C. Scaglione, Jr.	25Feb-15Sep70
LtCol Henry W. Steadman	16Sep70-23Feb71
Maj Neil R. Vanleeuwen	24Feb-12Mar71

Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 463 (HMH-463)

CO LtCol Raymond M. Ryan	1-7Jan70
LtCol Charles A. Block	8Jan-10Sep70
LtCol Robert R. Leisy	11Sep70-4Mar71
LtCol Thomas S. Reap	5Mar-18May71
Maj Myrddyn W. Edwards	9May-29May71

Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161 (HMM-161)

CO LtCol Bennie H. Mann, Jr.	1Jan-16Jul70
Maj Lewis J. Zilka	17Jul-15Aug70

Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 262 (HMH-262)

CO LtCol Richard A. Bancroft	1Jan-17May70
LtCol Gerald S. Pate	18May-23Nov70
LtCol Frank K. West, Jr.	24Nov70-7May71

Marine Light Helicopter Squadron 367 (HML-367)

CO LtCol Warren G. Cretney	1Jan-14Mar70
LtCol Harry E. Sexton	15Mar-21Oct70
LtCol Clifford E. Reese	22Oct70-31May71

Marine Observation Squadron 2 (VMO-2)

CO LtCol Stanley A. Challgren	1Jan-12Jan70
LtCol James M. Moriarty	13Jan-31Jan70

Marine Air Control Group 18 (MACG-18)

CO Col Stanley G. Dunwiddie, Jr.	1Jan-27Jun70
Col Charles T. Westcott	28Jun-14Sep70
LtCol Francis L. Delaney	15Sep70-14Apr71

Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron 18 (H&HS-18)

CO Maj Herbert E. Hoppmeyer	1Jan-8Mar70
LtCol Robert W. Fischer	9Mar-30Jul70
Maj John P. Fox	31Jul-28Oct70

Maj Douglas V. Stowell	29Oct70-1Jan71
Major Robert T. Roche	2Jan-22Feb71
Maj Leon E. Obenhaus	23Feb-9Apr71

Marine Air Support Squadron 3 (MASS-3)

CO LtCol John H. Dubois	1Jan-21Apr70
Maj Pasquale J. Florio	22Apr-10Aug70
Maj George S. Prescott	11Aug-5Sep70
Maj Victor J. Fulladosa	6Sep-1Oct70
LtCol William C. Simanikas	2Oct70-2Jun71

Marine Air Control Squadron 4 (MACS-4)

CO Maj Robert W. Molyneux, Jr.	1Jan-30Apr70
Maj Ronald G. Richardson	1May-7Jul70
Maj Lionel M. Silva	8Jul-2Sep70
Maj Theodore M. Quinlin	3Dep-2Oct70
LtCol Lyell H. Holmes	3Oct70-30Jan71
Maj George S. Prescott	31Jan-14Apr71

Marine Aircraft Group 11 (MAG-11)

CO Col Neal E. Heffernan	1Jan-18Feb70
Col Grover S. Stewatt, Jr.	19Feb-18Jun70
Col Albert C. Pommetenk	19Jun70-10Jun71

Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron 11 (H&MS-11)

CO LtCol Richard F. Hebert	1Jan-10Apr70
LtCol Speed F. Shea	11Apr-25Sep70
LtCol Arthur R. Anderson, Jr.	26Sep70-1Jun71

Marine Air Base Squadron 11 (MABS-11)

CO LtCol Paul A. Manning	1Jan-6Apr70
Maj Donald F. Crowe	7Apr-18Dec70
LtCol Clayton L. Comfort	19Dec70-10Jun71

Marine Composite Reconnaissance Squadron 1 (VMCJ-1)

CO LtCol Bob W. Farley	1Jan-14Apr70
LtCol Paul A. Manning	15Apr-14Jul70

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 542 (VMFA-542)

CO LtCol Keith A. Smith	1Jan-31Jan70

Marine All-Weather Attack Squadron 242 (VMA [AW]-242)

CO LtCol Thomas L. Griffin, Jr.	1Jan-2Jan70
LtCol Stanley P. Lewis	3Jan-19Aug70
Maj Patrick J. McCarthy	20Aug-11Sep70

Marine All-Weather Attack Squadron 225 (VMA [AW]-225)

CO Maj Peter M. Busch	1Jan-11Jan70
LtCol John J. Metzko	12Jan-6Jun70
Maj Patrick J. McCarthy	7Jun-19Aug70
Maj Marcus T. Fountain, Jr.	20Aug-15Oct70
LtCol John A. Manzione, Jr.	16Oct70-30Apr71

Marine Observation Squadron 2 (VMO-2)

CO LtCol Stanley A. Challgren	1Jan-11Jan
LtCol James M. Moriarty	12Jan-17Sep70
Maj Carl B. Olsen, Jr.	18Sep-26Nov70
LtCol Edward P. Janz	27Nov70-31Mar71

Marine Aircraft Group 12 (MAG-12)

CO Col Paul B. Henley	1Jan-4Feb70
Col James R. Weaver	5Feb-25Feb70

Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron 12 (H&MS-12)

CO LtCol Joseph J. Went	1Jan-27Jan70
Maj Charles A. Dixon	28Jan-25Feb70

Marine Air Base Squadron 12 (MABS-12)

CO LtCol George J. Ettlmeier	1Jan-18Feb70
LtCol Henry F. Witter	19Feb-25Feb70

Marine Attack Squadron 211 (VMA-211)

CO LtCol Louis Gasparine, Jr.	1Jan-25Feb70

Marine Attack Squadron 223 (VMA-223)

CO LtCol James W. Lazzo	1Jan-28Jan70

Marine Attack Squadron 311 (VMA-311)

CO LtCol Arthur R. Hickle	1Jan-12Feb70

Marine Aircraft Group 13 (MAG-13)

CO Col Thomas E. Murphtee	1Jan-17May70
Col Lawrence J. Stien	18May-15Oct70

Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron 13 (H&MS-13)

CO Maj Frank J. Horak, Jr.	1Jan-4Feb70
Maj Josephus L. Mavretic	5Feb-14Apr70
LtCol Robert W. Chapin	15Apr-30Sep70

Marine Air Base Squadron 13 (MABS-13)

CO LtCol Richard D. Revie	1Jan-12Mar70
Maj Daniel T. Benn	13Mar-25Apr70
LtCol Robert A. Christy	26Apr-6Jun70
Maj Daniel T. Benn	7Jun-2Sep70
Maj Michael J. Fibich, Jr.	3Sep-15Oct70

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 115 (VMFA-115)

CO LtCol Donald P. Bowen	1Jan-2Mar70
LtCol John V. Cox	3Mar-22Jul70
LtCol Michael Mura	23Jul70-28Feb71

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 122 (VMFA-122)

CO LtCol John K. Cochran	1Jan-6Jan70
LtCol Robert E. Howard, Jr.	7Jan-12Jul70
Maj Ross C. Chaimson	13Jul-8Sep70

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 314 (VMFA-314)

CO LtCol Thomas J. Kelly	1Jan-6Jun70
LtCol Robert A. Christy	7Jun-12Sep70

Marine Attack Squadron 311 (VMA-311)

CO LtCol Arthur R. Hickle	1Jan-31May70
LtCol James M. Bannan	1Jun-10Oct70
LtCol Jerome T. Hagen	11Oct70-12May71

Marine Wing Support Group 17 (MWSG-17)

CO Col Richard A. Savage	1Jan-8Feb70
Col Harvey L. Jensen	9Feb-6Aug70

Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron 17 (H&MS-17)

CO LtCol Dalvin Serrin	1Jan-6Aug70

Wing Equipment and Repair Squadron 17 (WERS-17)

CO Maj William F. Farley	1Jan-20Feb70
LtCol George J. Ertlmeier	21Feb-6Aug70

11th Dental Company

CO Capt Van L. Johnson, Jr., USN	1Jan-6May70
Capt Frank D. Grossman, USN	7May70-17Jan71
Cdr William P. Armstrong, USN	18Jan-14Apr71
Capt James J. Lyons, USN	15Apr-30Jun71

Force Logistic Command/1st Force Service Regiment

CG BGen Mauro J. Padalino	1Jan-22Oct70
BGen James R. Jones	23Oct70-14Apr71
CO Col Harold W. Evans, Jr.	16-26Jun71
C/S Col John L. Tobin	1Jan-17Jun70
Col Robert W. Calvert	18Jun-2Jul70
Col Garth K. Sturdevan	3Jul70-8Jun71
Col Harold W. Evans, Jr.	9Jun-15Jun71
G-1 LtCol John E. Redelfs	1Jan-31Jul70
LtCol Ralph D. First	1Aug70-10Jun71
Capt David R. Little	11Jun-26Jun71
G-2 LtCol Robert L. Solze	1Jan-9Oct70
Maj Amilcar Vazquez	10Oct70-26Jun71
G-3 Col William W. Storm III	1Jan-24Mar70
Col Robert W. Calvert	25Mar-10Oct70
Col Harold W. Evans, Jr.	11Oct70-8Jun71
Maj John R. Wuthrich	9Jun-26Jun71
G-4 LtCol Maurice H. Ivins, Jr.	1Jan-13Sep70
LtCol Charles G. Boicey	14Sep-22Dec70
LtCol Charles R. Poppe, Jr.	23Dec70-26Jun71
G-5 Maj Robert E. Johnson	1Jan-17Apr70
Maj Ronald E. Bane	18Apr-14Jun70
Maj Robert E. Johnson	15Jun-17Jun70

Headquarters & Service Battalion, 1st Force Service Regiment

CO LtCol Lewis R. Webb	1Jan-16Oct70
LtCol Donald J. Burger	17Oct70-2Jun71
LtCol Edward E. Crews	3Jun71-26Jun71

Supply Battalion, 1st Force Service Regiment

CO Col Robert W. Calvert	1Jan-24Mar70
Col Donald E. Morin	25Mar-14Aug70
Col Charles F. Langley	15Aug70-10May71
LtCol Eugene R. Puckett	11May-11Jun71
Maj Ronald L. Fraser	12Jun-26Jun71

Maintenance Battalion, 1st Force Service Regiment

CO LtCol Edward C. Morris	1Jan-3Apr70
LtCol Don D. Beal	4Apr-21Sep70
LtCol William F. Sheehan	22Sep70-18Feb71
LtCol Edward E. Crews	19Feb-30May71
Capt William E. Phelps	31May-17Jun71

Force Logistic Support Group Bravo, 1st Service Battalion (Rein)

CO Col Donald E. Morin	1Jan-12Mar70
Maj Norman L. Young	13Mar-30Jun70
LtCol Donald J. Burger	1Jul-15Sep70

1st Military Police Battalion

CO LtCol Speros D. Thomaidis	1Jan-1Jun70
LtCol Newell T. Donahoo	2Jun-17Nov70
LtCol John Colia	18Nov70-12Jun71

3d Military Police Battalion

CO LtCol Charles Fimian	1Jan-8Aug70

7th Motor Transport Battalion

CO LtCol Richard L. Prather	1Jan-13Feb70
Maj Lawrence E. Davies	14Feb-19Feb70

5th Communication Battalion

CO LtCol Dale E. Shatzer	Aug70-17Sep70
Maj Gerald F. Baker	18Sep-4Oct70

Force Logistic Command Attached Units

1st Radio Battalion

CO LtCol Delos M. Hopkins	1Jan-29Jun70
Maj Donald J. Hatch	30Jun-29Jul70
LtCol Edward D. Resnik	30Jul70-14Apr71

Combined Action Force Headquarters 11 Jan-21Jan71*

CO Col Theodore E. Metzger	11Jan-8Jul70
Col Ralph F. Estey	9Jul-21Sep70
LtCol John J. Tolnay	22Sep70-21Jan71

**CAF Headquarters was organized on 11Jan70 under III MAF until 26Mar70, and then XXIV Corps assumed control until 1Sep70. It then reverted to III MAF control until 21Jan71 when it was redesignated 2d Combined Action Group Headquarters.*

1st Combined Action Group*

CO LtCol David F. Seiler	1Jan-30Jun70
Maj George N. Robillard, Jr.	1Jul-13Sep70

**1st CAG was deactivated on 13Sep70.*

2d Combined Action Group

CO LtCol Don R. Christensen	1Jan-21Sep70
LtCol John J. Tolnay	22Sep70-11May71

3d Combined Action Group*

CO Col John B. Michaud	1Jan-4Feb70
LtCol Claude M. Daniels	5Feb-7Sep70

**3d CAG was deactivated on 7Sep70.*

4th Combined Action Group*

CO LtCol John J. Keenan	1Jan-17Feb70
Maj Robert D. King	18Feb-26Jun70
Maj Willis D. Ledeboer	27Jun-25Jul70

**4th CAG was deactivated on 25Jul70.*

3d Marine Amphibious Brigade Headquarters, 14Apr-28Jun71

CG MajGen Alan J. Armstrong	14Apr-28Jun71
ABC BGen Edwin H. Simmons	14Apr-24May71
BGen James R. Jones	25May-14Jun71
C/S Col Boris J. Frankovic	14Apr-10Jun71
G-1 Col Lavern J. Oltmer	14Apr-28Jun71
G-2 Col Forest J. Hunt	14Apr-28Jun71
G-3 Col Rex C. Denny, Jr.	14Apr-6Jun71
G-4 Col William L. McCulloch	14Apr-28Jun71
G-5 Maj Donald E. Sudduth	14Apr-28Jun71
G-6 Col Urban A. Lees	14Apr-3Jun71

Headquarters Company

CO LtCol Richard B. Talbott	14Apr-28Jun71

1st Marines

CO Col Paul X. Kelley	14Apr-9May71

1st Battalion, 11th Marines

CO LtCol Bruce F. Ogden	14Apr-13May71

3d 8-inch Howitzer Battery

CO Maj William J. McCallum	14Apr-24May71

Company A, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion

CO Maj Harlan C. Cooper, Jr.	14Apr-3May71

Company A, 1st Engineer Battalion

CO Maj James G. Dixon	14Apr-23Jun71

Company A, 7th Engineer Battalion

CO Maj Gilbert R. Meibaum	14Apr-10Jun71

Company C, 1st Shore Party Battalion

CO Maj Richard W. Sweet, Jr.	14Apr-21Jun71

Company A, 1st Motor Transport Battalion

CO Capt Plin McCann	14Apr-15Jun71

Company A, 1st Medical Battalion

CO Cdr Thomas A. Grossi, USN	14Apr-11May71
Lt Ivan D. Howard, USN	12May-22Jun71

11th Dental Company

CO Capt James J. Lyons, USN	15Apr-30Jun71

Marine Wing Headquarters Group 1 (MWHG-1)

CO LtCol Paul S. Frappollo	15Apr-30Jun71

Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron 1 (H&HS-1)

CO LtCol Paul S. Frappollo	15Apr-16May71
Maj Thomas P. Kirland	17May-30Jun71

Marine Wing Facilities Squadron 1 (MWFS-1)

CO Maj James R. Griffin	15Apr-30Jun71

Marine Wing Communication Squadron 1 (MWCS-1)

CO Maj Richard S. Kaye	15Apr-30Jun71

Marine Air Support Squadron 3 (MASS-3)

CO LtCol William C. Simanikas	15Apr-2Jun71

Marine Aircraft Group 11

CO Col Albert C. Pommerenk	14Apr-10Jun71

Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron 11 (H&MS-11)

CO LtCol Arthur R. Anderson, Jr.	15Apr-1Jun71

Marine Air Base Squadron 11 (MABS-11)

CO LtCol Clayton L. Comfort	15Apr-10Jun71

Marine All-Weather Attack Squadron 225 (VMA (AW)-225)

CO LtCol John A. Manzione, Jr.	15-30Apr71

Marine Attack Squadron 311 (VBA-311)

CO LtCol Jerome T. Hagen	15Apr-12May71

Marine Aircraft Group 16

CO Col Lewis C. Street III	14Apr-21Jun71

Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron 16 (H&MS-16)

CO Maj Con D. Silard, Jr.	15Apr-15Jun71
Maj Dennis R. Bowen	16Jun-20Jun71

Marine Air Base Squadron 16 (MABS-16)

CO LtCol John M. Dean	15-20Apr71
LtCol David A. Spurlock	21Apr-15Jun71
Maj Carmine W. DePietro	16-20Jun71

Marine Light Helicopter Squadron 167 (HML-167)
CO LtCol Richard J. Blanc 15Apr-10Jun71

Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262 (HMM-262)
CO LtCol Frank K. West, Jr. 15Apr-7May71

Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 263 (HMM-263)
CO Maj Dennis N. Anderson 15Apr-15May71

Marine Light Helicopter Squadron 367 (HML-367)
CO LtCol Clifford E. Reese 15Apr-31May71

Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 463 (HMH-463)
CO LtCol Thomas S. Reap 15Apr-18May71
Maj Myrddyn W. Edwards 19May-29May71

Force Logistic Command
CG BGen James R. Jones 14Apr-14Jun71
Col Harold W. Evans, Jr. 16-26Jun71

1st Military Police Battalion
CO LtCol John Colia 14Apr-12Jun71

Communication Support Company, 7th Communication Battalion
CO Maj Robert T. Himmerich 14Apr-22Jun71

2d Combined Action Group
CO LtCol John J. Tolany 14Apr-11May71

Appendix B

Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

A-1E – Douglas Skyraider, a propeller-driven, single-engine, attack aircraft.

A-4 – Douglas Skyhawk, a single-seat, jet attack aircraft in service on board carriers of the U.S. Navy and with land-based Marine attack squadrons.

A-6A – Grumman Intruder, a twin-jet, twin-seat, attack aircraft specifically designed to deliver weapons on targets completely obscured by weather or darkness.

AAR – After Action Report.

ABCCC – Airborne Battlefield Command and Control Center, a U.S. Air Force aircraft equipped with communications, data link, and display equipment; it may be employed as an airborne command post or a communications and intelligence relay facility.

AC-47 – Douglas C-47 Skytrain, twin-engine, fixed-wing transport modified with 7.62mm miniguns and used as a gunship.

AC-119 – Fairchild Hiller, C-119 military transport aircraft remodified into a gunship with side-firing 7.62mm miniguns.

ADC – Assistant Division Commander.

AdminO – Administrative Officer.

Adv – Advanced.

AFP – Armed Forces Police.

AGC – Amphibious command ship. The current designation is LCC.

AH-1G/J – Bell Huey Cobra helicopter specifically designed for close air support.

AK-47 – Russian-designed Kalashnikov gas-operated 7.62mm automatic rifle, with an effective range of 400 meters. It was the standard rifle of the *North Vietnamese Army*.

AKA – Attack cargo ship, a naval ship designed to transport combat-loaded cargo in an assault landing. LKA is the current designation.

ALMAR – All Marines, a Commandant of the Marine Corps communication directed to all Marines.

ALO – Air Liaison Officer, an officer (aviator/pilot) attached to a ground unit who functions as the primary advisor to the ground commander on air operation matters.

ANGLICO – Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company, an organization composed of Marine and Navy personnel specially qualified for control of naval gunfire and close air support. ANGLICO personnel normally provided this service while attached to U.S. Army, Korean, and ARVN units.

AO – Air Observer, an individual whose primary mission is to observe or to take photographs from an aircraft in order to adjust artillery fire or obtain military information.

AOA – Amphibious Objective Area, a defined geographical area within which is located the area or areas to be captured by the amphibious task force.

APA – Attack transport ship, a naval ship, designed for combat loading elements of a battalion landing team. LPA is the current designation.

APC – Armored Personnel Carrier.

APD – Airborne Personnel Detector.

APT – Armed Propaganda Team, a South Vietnamese pacification cadre who carried weapons in self-defense as they attempted to convince South Vietnamese villagers to remain loyal to the government.

Arc Light – The codename for B-52 bombing missions in South Vietnam.

ARG – Amphibious Ready Group.

Arty – Artillery.

ARVN – Army of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam).

ASP – Ammunition Supply Point.

ASRT – Air Support Radar Team, a subordinate operational component of a tactical air control system which provides ground controlled precision flight path guidance and weapons release for attack aircraft.

B-3 – North Vietnamese military command established in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam to control military operations in Kontum, Dar Lac, and Pleiku Provinces.

B-40 rockets – Communist rocket-propelled grenade.

B-52 – Boeing Stratofortress, U.S. Air Force eight-engine, swept-wing, heavy jet bomber.

BA – Base Area.

Barrel Roll – Codename for air operations over Laos.

BDC – Base Defense Commander.

BGen – Brigadier General.

BLT – Battalion Landing Team.

Bn – Battalion.

Brig – Brigade.

C-117D – Douglas Skytrain, a twin-engine transport aircraft. The C-117D was an improved version of the C-47, the military version of the DC-3.

C-130 – Lockheed Hercules, a four-engine turboprop transport aircraft.

CAAR – Combat After Action Report.

CACO – Combined Action Company.

CAF – Combined Action Force.

CAG – Combined Action Group.

CAP – Combined Action Platoon.

Capt – Captain.

CAS – Close Air Support.

CBU – Cluster Bomb Unit.

CCC – Combined Campaign Plan.

Cdr – Commander.

CEC – Construction Engineer Corps.

CG – Commanding General.

CH-37 – Sikorsky twin-engine, heavy transport helicopter which carries three crew members and 20 passengers.

CH-46 – Boeing Vertol Sea Knight, a twin-engine, tandem-rotor transport helicopter, designed to carry a four-man crew and 17 combat-loaded troops.

CH-53 – Sikorsky Sea Stallion, a single-rotor, heavy transport helicopter powered by two shaft-turbine engines with an aver-

age payload of 12,800 pounds. Carries crew of three and 38 combat-loaded troops.

Chieu Hoi—The South Vietnamese amnesty program designed to attract Communist troops and cadre to defect to the government cause.

CICV—Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam.

CID—Criminal Investigative Division.

CIDG—Civilian Irregular Defense Group, South Vietnamese paramilitary force, composed largely of Montagnards, the nomadic tribesmen who populate the South Vietnamese highlands, and advised by the U.S. Army Special Forces.

CinCPac—Commander in Chief, Pacific.

CinCPacFlt—Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet.

CIT—Counter Intelligence Team.

Class (I-V)—Categories of military supplies, e.g., Class I, rations; Class II, POL; Class V, Ammunition.

Claymore—A U.S. directional antipersonnel mine.

CMC—Commandant of the Marine Corps.

CMH—Center of Military History, Department of the Army.

CNO—Chief of Naval Operations.

CO—Commanding Officer.

COC—Combat Operations Center.

Col—Colonel.

Combined Action Program—A Marine pacification program which integrated a Marine infantry squad with a South Vietnamese Popular Force platoon in a Vietnamese village.

ComdC—Command Chronology.

ComdHist—Command History.

ComNavForPac—Commander, Naval Forces, Pacific.

ComNavForV—Commander, Naval Forces, Vietnam.

ComUSMACV—Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam.

CORDS—Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support, the agency organized under MACV in May 1967 and charged with coordinating U.S.-Vietnamese pacification efforts.

COSVN—Central Office of South Vietnam, the nominal Communist military and political headquarters in South Vietnam.

County Fair—A sophisticated cordon and search operation in a particular hamlet or village by South Vietnamese troops, police, local officials, and U.S. Marines in an attempt to screen and register the local inhabitants.

CP—Command Post.

CPDC—Central Pacification and Development Council, the South Vietnamese government agency responsible for coordinating the pacification plan.

CRC—Control and Reporting Center, an element of the U.S. Air Force tactical air control system, subordinate to the Tactical Air Control Center, which conducted radar and warning operations.

CRIMP—Consolidated Republic of Vietnam Improvement and Modernization Plan.

CSC—Communications Service Company.

CTZ—Corps Tactical Zone.

CUPP—Combined Unit Pacification Program, a variation of the combined action concept and involving the integration of a Marine line company with a Popular Force or Regional Force unit.

DAIS—Da Nang Antiinfiltration System.

DASC—Direct Air Support Center, a subordinate operational component of the Marine air control system designed for control of close air support and other direct air support operations.

D-Day—Day scheduled for the beginning of an operation.

DD—Navy destroyer.

DIOCC—District Intelligence and Operations Coordination Center.

Div—Division.

DMZ—Demilitarized Zone separating North and South Vietnam.

DOD—Department of Defense.

DPP—Data Processing Platoon.

DPS—Data Processing Section.

DRV—Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam).

DSA—District Senior Advisor.

DSS—Da Nang Special Sector.

Dtd—Dated.

Duster—The nickname for the U.S. Army's tracked vehicle, the M-42, which mounted dual 40mm automatic weapons.

DVA—Da Nang Vital Area.

EA-6A—The electronic-countermeasures version of the A-6A Intruder.

ECM—Electronic Countermeasures, a major subdivision of electronic warfare involving actions against enemy electronic equipment or to exploit the enemy's use of electromagnetic radiations from such equipment.

EF-10B—An ECM-modified version of the Navy F-3D Skynight, a twin-engine jet night-fighter of Korean War vintage.

ELINT—Electronic Intelligence, the intelligence information gained by monitoring radiations from enemy electronic equipment.

Engr—Engineer.

EOD—Explosive Ordnance Device.

F-4B—McDonnell Phantom II, a twin-engined, two-seat, long-range, all-weather jet interceptor and attack bomber.

FAC(A)—Forward Air Controller (Airborne).

FDC—Fire Direction Center.

FFV—Field Force, Vietnam I and II, U.S. Army commands in II and III Corps areas of South Vietnam.

FLC—Force Logistic Command.

FLSG—Force Logistic Support Group.

FLSU—Force Logistic Support Unit.

FMFPac—Fleet Marine Force, Pacific.

FO—Forward Observer.

FRC—Federal Records Center.

Front 4—A Communist headquarters subordinate to *MR-5* and responsible for Quang Nam Province.

FSB—Fire Support Base.

FSCC—Fire Support Coordination Center, a single location involved in the coordination of all forms of fire support.

FSR—Force Service Regiment.

Fwd—Forward.

FWMF—Free World Military Force.

G—Refers to staff positions on a general staff, e.g., G-1 would refer to the staff member responsible for personnel; G-2, intelligence; G-3, operations; G-4, logistics, and G-5, civil affairs.

Gen—General.

Golden Fleece—Marine rice harvest protection operation.

Grenade Launcher, M79—U.S.-built, single-shot, breech-loaded shoulder weapon which fires 40mm projectiles and weighs approximately 6.5 pounds when loaded; it has a sustained rate of aimed fire of five-seven rounds per minute and an effective range of 375 meters.

Gun, 175mm, M107—U.S.-built, self-propelled gun which weighs 62,000 pounds and fires a 147-pound projectile to a maximum

range of 32,800 meters. Maximum rate of fire is one round every two minutes.
GVN—Government of Vietnam (South Vietnam).

H&I fires—Harassing and Interdiction fires.
H&MS—Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron.
H&S Co—Headquarters and Service Company.
HAWK—A mobile, surface-to-air guided missile, designed to defend against low-flying enemy aircraft and short-range missiles.
HC(A)—Helicopter Commander (Airborne).
HE—High Explosive.
Hectare—A unit of land measure in the metric system and equal to 2.471 acres.
HES—Hamlet Evaluation System, the computerized statistical data system used to measure pacification in the hamlets and villages of South Vietnam.
H-Hour—The specific hour an operation begins.
HistBr, G-3Div, HQMC—Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, the Vietnam-era predecessor of the History and Museums Division.
HLZ—Helicopter Landing Zone.
HMH—Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron.
HMM—Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron.
Hoi Chanh—A Viet Cong or North Vietnamese defector under the *Chieu Hoi* amnesty program.
Howitzer, 8-inch (M55)—U.S.-built, self-propelled, heavy-artillery piece with a maximum range of 16,900 meters and a rate of fire of one round every two minutes.
Howitzer, 105mm, M101A1—U.S.-built, towed, general purpose light artillery piece with a maximum range of 11,000 meters and maximum rate of fire of four rounds per minute.
Howitzer, 155mm, M114A towed and M109 self-propelled—U.S.-built medium artillery with a maximum range of 15,080 meters and a maximum rate of fire of three rounds per minute. Marines employed both models in Vietnam. The newer and heavier self-propelled M109 was largely road-bound, while the lighter, towed M114A could be moved either by truck or by helicopter.
Howtar—A 4.2 (107mm) mortar tube mounted on a 75mm pack howitzer frame.
HST—Helicopter Support Team.
"Huey"—Popular name for UH-1 series of helicopters.

ICC—International Control Commission, established by the Geneva Accords of 1954 to supervise the truce ending the First Indochina War between the French and the Viet Minh and resulting in the partition of Vietnam at the 17th Parallel. The members of the Commission were from Canada, India, and Poland.
ICCC—I Corps Coordinating Council, consisting of U.S. and Vietnamese officials in I Corps who coordinated the civilian assistance program.
I Corps—The military and administrative subdivision which included the five northern provinces of South Vietnam.
IDA—Institute for Defense Analysis.
I MAF—I Marine Amphibious Force.
I MEF—I Marine Expeditionary Force.
Intel—Intelligence.
Intvw—Interview.
IOD—Integrated Observation Device.
ITT—Interrogation/Translator Team.

J—The designation for members of a joint staff which includes members of several services comprising the command, e.g., J-1 would refer to the staff members responsible for personnel; J-2, intelligence; J-3, operations; J-4, logistics; and J-5, civil affairs.
JCS—Joint Chiefs of Staff (U.S.).
JGS—Joint General Staff (South Vietnamese).
JTD—Joint Table of Distribution.
JUSPAO—Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office.

KC-130—The in-flight refueling tanker configuration of the C-130 Lockheed Hercules.
KIA—Killed in Action.
Kingfisher operations—Heliborne combat patrols for quick reaction operations.
Kit Carson Scout—Viet Cong defectors recruited by Marines to serve as scouts, interpreters, and intelligence agents.

L-Hour—In planned helicopter operations, it is the specific hour the helicopters land in the landing zone.
LAAM Bn—Light Antiaircraft Missile Battalion.
LCM—Landing Craft Mechanized, designed to land tanks, trucks, and trailers directly onto the beach.
LCVP—Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel, a small craft with a bow ramp used to transport assault troops and light vehicles to the beach.
LGB—Laser Guided Bomb, popularly known as the "smart bomb."
LKA—The current designation for an attack cargo ship. See AKA.
LOC—Lines of Communication.
LOI—Letter of Instruction.
LPD—Amphibious transport, dock, a ship designed to transport and land troops, equipment, and supplies by means of embarked landing craft, amphibious vehicles, and helicopters. It had both a submersible well deck and a helicopter landing deck.
LPH—Amphibious assault ship, a ship designed or modified to transport and land troops, equipment, and supplies by means of embarked helicopters.
LSA—Logistic Support Area.
LSD—Landing Ship, Dock, a landing ship designed to combat load, transport, and launch amphibious crafts or vehicles together with crews and embarked personnel, and to provide limited docking and repair services to small ships and crafts. It lacks the helicopter landing deck of the LPD.
LST—Landing Ship, Tank, landing ship designed to transport heavy vehicles and to land them on a beach.
Lt—Lieutenant.
LtCol—Lieutenant Colonel.
LTDS—Laser Target Designation System.
LtGen—Lieutenant General.
Ltr—Letter.
LVTE—Landing Vehicle, Tracked, Engineer, a lightly armored amphibian vehicle designed for minefield and obstacle clearance.
LVTH—Landing Vehicle, Tracked, Howitzer, a lightly armored, self-propelled, amphibious 105mm howitzer. It resembles an LVTP with a turret for the howitzer.
LVTP—Landing Vehicle, Tracked, Personnel, an amphibian vehicle used to land and/or transport personnel.
LZ—Landing Zone.

MAB—Marine Amphibious Brigade.
MABS—Marine Air Base Squadron.
Machine gun, .50-caliber—U.S.-built, belt-fed, recoil-operated, air-

cooled automatic weapon, which weighs approximately 80 pounds without mount or ammunition; it has a sustained rate of fire of 100 rounds per minute and an effective range of 1,450 meters.

Machine gun, M60—U.S.-built, belt-fed, gas-operated, air-cooled, 7.62mm automatic weapon, which weighs approximately 20 pounds without mount or ammunition; it has a sustained rate of fire of 100 rounds per minute and an effective range of 1,000 meters.

MACS—Marine Air Control Squadron, provides and operates ground facilities for the detection and interception of hostile aircraft and for the navigational direction of friendly aircraft in the conduct of support operations.

MACV—Military Assistance Command, Vietnam.

MAF—Marine Amphibious Force.

MAG—Marine Aircraft Group.

Main Force—Refers to organized Viet Cong battalions and regiments as opposed to local guerrilla groups.

Maj—Major.

MajGen—Major General.

MarDiv—Marine Division.

Marines—Designates a Marine regiment, e.g., 3d Marines.

MASS—Marine Air Support Squadron, provides and operates facilities for the control of support aircraft operating in direct support of ground forces.

MAU—Marine Advisory Unit, the Marine advisory unit under the Naval Advisory Group which administered the advisory effort to the South Vietnamese Marine Corps; not to be confused with a Marine Amphibious Unit.

MAW—Marine Aircraft Wing.

MCAF—Marine Corps Air Facility.

MCAS—Marine Corps Air Station.

MCCC—Marine Corps Command Center.

MCO—Marine Corps Order.

MCOAG—Marine Corps Operations Analysis Group.

MCSA—Marine Corps Supply Agency.

MedCap—Medical Civilian Assistance Program.

MedEvac—Medical Evacuation.

MIA—Missing in Action.

MilHistBr—Military History Branch.

MO—Mount Out.

MOA—Mount Out Augmentation.

Mortar, 4.2-inch, M30—U.S.-built, rifled, muzzle-loaded, drop-fired weapon consisting of tube, base-plate and standard; weapon weighs 330 pounds and has maximum range of 4,020 meters. Rate of fire is 20 rounds per minute.

Mortar, 60mm, M19—U.S.-built, smooth-bore, muzzle-loaded weapon, which weighs 45.2 pounds when assembled; it has a maximum rate of fire of 30 rounds per minute and sustained rate of fire of 18 rounds per minute; the effective range is 2,000 meters.

Mortar, 81mm, M29—U.S.-built, smooth-bore, muzzle-loaded, which weighs approximately 115 pounds when assembled; it has a sustained rate of fire of two rounds per minute and an effective range of 2,300-3,650 meters, depending upon ammunition used.

Mortar, 82mm—Soviet-built, smooth-bore, mortar, single-shot, high angle of fire weapon which weighs approximately 123 pounds; it has a maximum rate of fire of 25 rounds per minute and a maximum range of 3,040 meters.

Mortar, 120mm—Soviet- or Chinese Communist-built, smooth bore, drop or trigger fired, mortar which weighs approximately 600 pounds; it has a maximum rate of fire of 15 rounds per minute and a maximum range of 5,700 meters.

MR—Military Region; corps tactical zones were redesignated military regions in 1970, e.g. I Corps Tactical Zone became Military Region 1 (MR 1).

MR-5—Military Region 5, a Communist political and military sector in northern South Vietnam, including all of I Corps. NVA units in *MR-5* did not report to *COSVN*.

Ms—Manuscript.

MSG—Marine Security Group.

Msg—Message.

NAC—Northern Artillery Cantonment.

NAG—Naval Advisory Group.

NAS—Naval Air Station.

NCC—Naval Component Commander.

NCO—Noncommissioned Officer.

NGLO—Naval Gunfire Liaison Officer.

NLF—National Liberation Front, the political arm of the Communist-led insurgency against the South Vietnamese Government.

NMCB—Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (Seabees).

NMCC—National Military Command Center.

NOD—Night Observation Device.

NPFF—National Police Field Force.

NSA—Naval Support Activity.

NSD—Naval Supply Depot.

NSDC—Northern Sector Defense Command.

Nui—Vietnamese word for hill or mountain.

Nung—A Vietnamese tribesman, of a separate ethnic group and probably of Chinese origin.

NVA—North Vietnamese Army, often used colloquially to refer to a North Vietnamese soldier.

O-1B—Cessna, single-engine observation aircraft.

OAB, NHD—Operational Archives Branch, Naval History Division.

Ontos—U.S.-built, lightly armored, tracked antitank vehicle armed with six coaxially-mounted 106mm recoilless rifles.

OpCon—Operational Control, the authority granted to a commander to direct forces assigned for specific missions or tasks which are usually limited by function, time, or location.

OpO—Operation Order, a directive issued by a commander to subordinate commanders for the execution of an operation.

OP—Outpost or observation point.

OPlan—Operation Plan, a plan for a single or series of connected operations to be carried out simultaneously or in succession; it is the form of directive employed by higher authority to permit subordinate commanders to prepare supporting plans and orders.

OpSum—Operational Summary.

ORLL—Operations Report/Lessons Learned.

OSJS (MACV)—Office of the Secretariat, Joint Staff (Military Assistance Command Vietnam).

OV-10—North American Rockwell Bronco, twin-engine aircraft specifically designed for light armed reconnaissance missions.

Pacifier operations—A variation of Kingfisher quick reaction operations.

PAVN—Peoples Army of Vietnam (North Vietnam). This acronym was dropped in favor of *NVA*.

PDC—Pacification and Development Councils.
PF—Popular Force, Vietnamese militia who were usually employed in the defense of their own communities.
Phoenix program—A covert U.S. and South Vietnamese program aimed at the eradication of the Viet Cong infrastructure in South Vietnam.
PIIC—Photo Imagery Interpretation Center.
POL—Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricants.
Practice Nine—The codename for the planning of the antiinfiltration barrier across the DMZ.
PRC-25—Standard radio used by Marine ground units in Vietnam that allowed for voice communication for distances up to 25 miles.
Project Delta—A special South Vietnamese reconnaissance group consisting of South Vietnamese Special Forces troops and U.S. Army Special Forces advisors.
PRU—Provincial Reconnaissance Unit.
PSA—Province Senior Advisor.
PSDF—Peoples Self-Defense Force, a local self-defense force organized by the South Vietnamese Government after the enemy's Tet offensive in 1968.

QDSF—Quang Da Special Zone.
QRF—Quick Reaction Force.

R&R—Rest and Recreation.
Recoilless rifle, 106mm, M401A1—U.S. built, single-shot, recoilless, breech-loaded weapon which weighs 438 pounds when assembled and mounted for firing; it has a sustained rate of fire of six rounds per minute and an effective range of 1,365 meters.
Regt—Regiment.
Revolutionary Development—The South Vietnamese pacification program started in 1966.
Revolutionary Development Teams—Specially trained Vietnamese political cadre who were assigned to individual hamlets and villages and conducted various pacification and civilian assistance tasks on a local level.
RF-4B—Photo-reconnaissance model of the F4B Phantom II.
RF-8A—Reconnaissance version of the F-8 Chance Vought Crusader.
RF—Regional Force, Vietnamese militia who were employed in a specific area.
Rifle, M14—Gas-operated, magazine-fed, air-cooled, semiautomatic, 7.62mm caliber shoulder weapon, which weighs 12 pounds with a full 20-round magazine; it has a sustained rate of fire of 30 rounds per minute and an effective range of 460 meters.
Rifle, M16—Gas-operated, magazine-fed, air-cooled, automatic, 5.56mm caliber shoulder weapon, which weighs 3.1 pounds with a 20-round magazine; it has a sustained rate of fire of 12-15 rounds per minute and an effective range of 460 meters.
RLT—Regimental Landing Team.
ROK—Republic of Korea.
Rolling Thunder—Codename for U.S. air operations over North Vietnam.
Rough Rider—Organized vehicle convoys, often escorted by helicopters and armored vehicles, using Vietnam's roads to supply Marine bases.
Route Package—Codename used with a number to designate areas of North Vietnam for the American bombing campaign. Route Package I was the area immediately north of DMZ.
ROE—Rules of Engagement.
RPG—Rocket-Propelled Grenade.
RRU—Radio Research Unit.
Rural Reconstruction—The predecessor campaign to Revolutionary Development.
RVN—Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam).
RVNAF—Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces.
RZ—Reconnaissance Zone.

S—Refers to staff positions on regimental and battalion levels. S-1 would refer to the staff member responsible for personnel; S-2, intelligence; S-3, operations; S-4, logistics; and S-5, civil affairs.
SAM—Surface to Air Missile.
SAR—Search and Rescue.
SATS—Short Airfield for Tactical Support, an expeditionary airfield used by Marine Corps aviation that included a portable runway surface, aircraft launching and recovery devices, and other essential expeditionary airfield components.
SCAMP—Sensor Control and Maintenance Platoon.
SEATO—Southeast Asia Treaty Organization.
2d AD—2d Air Division, the major U.S. Air Force command in Vietnam prior to the establishment of the Seventh Air Force.
SecDef—Secretary of Defense.
SecState—Secretary of State.
Seventh AF—Seventh Air Force, the major U.S. Air Force command in Vietnam.
Seventh Fleet—The U.S. fleet assigned to the Pacific.
SFD—Surprise Firing Device, a euphemism for a boobytrap.
SID—Seismic Intrusion Device, sensor used to monitor movement through ground vibrations.
SitRep—Situation Report.
SKS—Russian-designed Simonov gas-operated 7.62mm semiautomatic rifle.
SLF—Special Landing Force.
SMA—Senior Marine Advisor.
SOG—Studies and Operations Group, the cover name for the organization that carried out cross-border operations.
Song—Vietnamese for "river."
SOP—Standing Operating Procedure, set of instructions laying out standardized procedures.
SPIE—Special Patrol Insertion/Extraction line.
Spt Rept—Spot Report.
Sortie—An operational flight by one aircraft.
Sparrow Hawk—A small rapid-reaction force on standby, ready for insertion by helicopter for reinforcement of units in contact with the enemy.

SSDC—Southern Sector Defense Command.
Steel Tiger—The codename for the air campaign over Laos.
Stingray—Special Marine reconnaissance missions in which small Marine reconnaissance teams call artillery and air attacks on targets of opportunity.
Strike Company—An elite company in a South Vietnamese infantry division, directly under the control of the division commander.

TAC(A)—Tactical Air Coordinator (Airborne), an officer in an airplane, who coordinates close air support.
TACC—Tactical Air Control Center, the principal air operations installation for controlling all aircraft and air-warning functions of tactical air operations.

TACP—Tactical Air Control Party, a subordinate operational component of a tactical air control system designed to provide air liaison to land forces and for the control of aircraft.
TADC—Tactical Air Direction Center, an air operations installation under the Tactical Air Control Center, which directs aircraft and aircraft warning functions of the tactical air center.
TAFDS—Tactical Airfield Fuel Dispensing System, the expeditionary storage and dispensing system of aviation fuel at tactical airfields. It uses 10,000-gallon fabric tanks to store the fuel.
TAOC—Tactical Air Operations Center, a subordinate component of the air command and control system which controls all enroute air traffic and air defense operations.
Tank, M48—U.S.-built 50.7-ton tank with a crew of four; primary armament is turret-mounted 90mm gun with one .30-caliber and one .50-caliber machine gun; has maximum road speed of 32 miles per hour and an average range of 195 miles.
TAOC—Tactical Air Operations Center, a subordinate component of the air command and control system which controls all enroute air traffic and air defense operations.
TAOC—Tactical Area of Coordination.
TAOI—Tactical Area of Interest.
TAOR—Tactical Area of Responsibility, a defined area of land for which responsibility is specifically assigned to the commander of the area as a measure for control of assigned forces and coordination of support.
TE—Task Element.
TE—Table of Equipment.
TG—Task Group.
Tiger Hound—Airstrikes in Laos directed by U.S. Air Force small fixed-wing observation aircraft, flying up to 12 miles into southeastern Laos.
TO—Table of Organization.
Trung-si—A South Vietnamese Popular Force sergeant.
TSF—Transitional Support Force.
TU—Task Unit.

UCMJ—Uniform Code of Military Justice
UH-1E-Bell "Huey"—A single-engine, light attack/observation helicopter noted for its maneuverability and firepower; carries a crew of three; it can be armed with air-to-ground rocket packs and fuselage-mounted, electrically-fired machine guns.
UH-34D—Sikorsky Sea Horse, a single-engine medium transport helicopter with a crew of three, carries eight to 12 combat soldiers, depending upon weather conditions.
USA—U.S. Army.
USAAG—U.S. Army Advisory Group.
USAF—U.S. Air Force.
USAID—U.S. Agency for International Development.
USARV—U.S. Army, Vietnam.
USASuppComDaNang—U.S. Army Support Command, Da Nang.
USIA—U.S. Information Agency.
USMC—U.S. Marine Corps.
U.S. Mission Council—Council, chaired by the U.S. Ambassador to South Vietnam and including ComUSMACV, which developed and coordinated U.S. policy within South Vietnam.
USN—U.S. Navy.

VC—Viet Cong, a term used to refer to the Communist guerrillas in South Vietnam; a contraction of the Vietnamese phrase meaning "Vietnamese Communists."
Viet Minh—The Vietnamese contraction for Viet Nam Doc Lap Nong Minh Hoi, a Communist-led coalition of nationalist groups, which actively opposed the Japanese in World War II and the French in the first Indochina War.
VCI—Viet Cong Infrastructure.
VIS—Vietnamese Information Service.
VMA—Marine attack squadron (in naval aviation, the "V" designates "heavier than air" as opposed to craft that are "lighter than air").
VMF(AW)—Marine Fighter Squadron (All-Weather).
VMFA—Marine Fighter Attack Squadron.
VMCJ—Marine Composite Reconnaissance Squadron.
VMGR—Marine Refueller Transport Squadron.
VMO—Marine Observation Squadron.
VNAF—Vietnamese Air Force.
VNMB—Vietnamese Marine Brigade.
VNMC—Vietnamese Marine Corps.
VNN—Vietnamese Navy.
VT—Variable timed electronic fuze for an artillery shell which causes airburst over the target area.

WestPac—Western Pacific.
WIA—Wounded in Action.
WFRC—Washington Federal Records Center.

Appendix C

Chronology of Significant Events January 1970-June 1971

1970

6 January	An estimated force of 100 VC attacked Fire Support Base Ross, which was then occupied by Companies A and B of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, the battalion headquarters group, and two artillery batteries. Thirteen Marines were killed and 63 were wounded while the VC left 39 dead behind.
8 January	Building on the combined action platoon concept, III MAF formally established the Combined Unit Pacification Program (CUPP). Under the CUPP, Marine rifle companies deployed their squads in hamlets to work with the RFs and PFs much like the CAPs did. The CUPP differed in that the rifle companies were given no special training, and the Marine units remained under operational control of parent regiments, generally operating within the regiment's AO.
11 January	III MAF formally activated the Combined Action Force, incorporating the four combined action groups (CAGs) under its own headquarters rather than through an assistant chief of staff within III MAF. In January the CAF included 42 Marine officers and 2,050 enlisted men, along with 2 naval officers and 126 hospital corpsmen. The 20 combined action companies and 114 combined action platoons worked with about 3,000 RFs and PFs at the time.
18 January	A North Vietnamese spokesman said that allowing POWs to send a postcard home once a month and to receive packages from home every other month was, in effect, a means of accounting for those captured.
26 January	President Nguyen Van Thieu appealed to friendly nations for continued aid, saying he would go his own way if allied policies were not in accord with the South Vietnamese government's.
28 January	Troop movement for Keystone Bluejay, the first redeployment of 1970, began and continued until 19 March. Among the ground and aviation units redeployed were 26th Marines, VMAs -223 and -211, VMFA-542, HMH-361, and MAG-12.
31 January	Enemy traffic along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in January increased to 10 times what it was in September-October 1969.
31 January	III MAF strength in Vietnam was 55,191.
5 February	At the Paris peace talks, the enemy produced the first letter of a POW held in South Vietnam by the VC. This act took place in response to heavy pressure from the U.S. and South Vietnamese.
17 February	President Nixon said the military aspects of Vietnamization were proceeding on schedule.

19 February	Lieutenant General Nickerson and Lieutenant General Zais briefed General Abrams on the planned Army takeover of ICTZ on 9 March. Abrams sanctioned the arrangement proposed by Nickerson whereby III MAF, while becoming subordinate to XXIV Corps, still remained parent unit of 1st Marine Division and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, preserving the integrity of the Marine air-ground team concept in Vietnam.
5-9 March	During Operation Cavalier Beach, III MAF relocated to Camp Haskins and XXIV Corps moved from its headquarters in Phu Bai to Camp Horn.
9 March	Lieutenant General Herman Nickerson, Jr., passed operational command of I Corps to Lieutenant General Melvin Zais, USA, and simultaneously passed command of III MAF to Lieutenant General Keith B. McCutcheon.
9 March	III MAF turned command of I Corps over to XXIV Corps. Major elements of III MAF at the time included the 1st Marine Division (Rein), 1st MAW, and FLC.
19 March	The 26th Marines, which had received a Presidential Unit Citation for the defense of Khe Sanh, departed Vietnam. Following the regiment's departure, the 1st Marines was left to control the Rocket Belt, an area of some 534 square kilometers.
19 March	The U.S. said that its recognition of Cambodian sovereignty would continue following the seizure of power from Prince Norodom Sihanouk by General Lon Nol.
26 March	The Combined Action Force was placed under the operational control of XXIV Corps while remaining under the administrative control of III MAF.
April	During April the Marine Corps stopped taking draftees.
14 April	Major General C. F. Widdecke relieved Major General Edwin B. Wheeler as Commanding General, 1st Marine Division, and as Deputy Commander, III MAF.
21 April	President Thieu said that the Vietnamese could gradually assume greater responsibilities as the Americans withdrew from Vietnam but that the South Vietnamese would require more aid from allies.
23 April	The 1st Force Service Support Regiment was closed down and transferred to Camp Pendleton.
27 April	Following a helicopter crash on 18 April Major General Edwin B. Wheeler, who broke a leg on impact, was replaced by Major General Charles F. Widdecke.
30 April	President Nixon announced that several thousand American troops supporting the RVNAF invasion entered Cambodia's Fishook area bordering South Vietnam to attack the supposed location of the headquarters of the Communist military operation in South Vietnam. American advisors, tactical air support, medical evacuation teams, and logistical support were also provided to the RVNAF. On 9 May Brigade B of the VNMC crossed the Cambodian border and at 0930 landed at Neck Luong to begin operations. Allied troops in Cambodia increased to 50,000 by 6 May. Withdrawal of American units from Cambodia was completed when the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) returned to South Vietnam on 29 June.

29 April — Beginning this date RVNAF and U.S. Army forces conducted search and destroy operations in a dozen base areas in Cambodia adjoining II, III, and IV Corps in South Vietnam. A U.S.-Vietnamese naval task force also swept up the Mekong Rivet to open a supply line to Phnom Penh, the Cambodian capital.

1-31 May — The VC progressively returned to guerrilla warfare and terrorism in 1970. During May the VC in Quang Nam killed 129 civilians, wounded 247, and kidnapped 73. Most of the latter was interpreted as being forcible recruitment of young males.

3 May — III MAF approved a 1st Division request to demolish the Da Nang Antiinfiltration System (DAIS), the line of minefields, cleared land, barbed wire fences, and electronic sensors which had been developed to stop enemy infiltration of the Rocket Belt. Never fully constructed or manned, the DAIS was regarded as ineffective by most Marines because farmers and water buffaloes could not be distinguished from rocket-bearing enemy.

4 May — Four students at Kent State University in Ohio were killed by soldiers of the U.S. National Guard who had been called to halt riots which were stimulated in part by the Cambodian invasion.

4 May — The Senate Foreign Relations Committee accused President Nixon of usurping the war-making powers of Congress by allowing American troops to participate in the RVNAF's invasion of Cambodia. A day later President Nixon responded, saying American troops would penetrate no further than 19 miles and would be withdrawn by 1 July 1970.

6 May — Que Son District Headquarters in Quang Nam Province received some 200 rounds of mortar fire followed by a ground attack of an enemy force estimated at greater than battalion strength. Marines of Company H, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, supported by artillery aided the beseiged RF/PF units. Friendly losses were 11 killed, including one American, and 41 wounded; 27 enemy were killed.

11 June — To terrorize the villagers of Phu Thanh—a village near the Ba Ren Bridge where CUPP team Number 9 of 1st Platoon, Company A, 7th Marines operated—elements of the *V-25th Main Force Battalion* and the *T-89th Sapper Battalion* (VC) attacked at 0200, killing 74 civilians, many of them women and children, wounding 60 seriously, and destroying 156 houses.

11 June — Thanh My Hamlet eight kilometers southwest of Hoi An, was attacked by the VC/NVA, resulting in 150 civilians killed and 60 wounded. In destroying the hamlet the enemy left behind 16 dead.

21 June — Da Nang was hit by nine 122mm rockets, killing seven civilians, wounding 19, and destroying seven houses.

30 June — The Naval Support Activity Da Nang was deactivated and the following day Army-Marine service support agreements went into effect.

1-2 July	Major General Alan J. Armstrong replaced Major General William G. Thrash as Commanding General, 1st MAW.
2 July	To unify command and strengthen the administration of the RVNAF President Nguyen Van Thieu incorporated the regional and popular forces into the Vietnamese Army and redesignated Corps Tactical Zones as Military Regions (MRs). Under the reorganization the corps deputy commander conducted major offensive operations in the MR while the MR deputy commander, in charge of territorial defense and pacification, commanded the RFs and PFs. Concurrently, MACV and the Vietnamese Joint General Staff completed plans to incorporate the Civilian Defense Groups into ARVN Border Defense Ranger Battalions.
3 July	The Hai Lang PF Platoon; RF group 1/11 and Companies 121 and 122; and CAPs 4-3-2 and 4-1-2, located nine kilometers southeast of Quang Tri City, were attacked by an enemy force of unknown size. Supported by gunships and artillery, the allies killed 135 enemy and captured 74 weapons while losing 16 killed and six missing in action.
6 July	A house fact-finding mission to South Vietnam filed a report expressing optimism about ending the war. The report also noted that South Vietnam's major problem was its economy.
15-16 July	Operation Barren Green was launched by elements of the 5th Marines in the northern Arizona Territory south of the Vu Gia River to prevent the VC/NVA from collecting the ripened corn of this fertile region. A second operation, Lyon Valley, was initiated by the 5th Marines on 16 August in the mountains bordering the Arizona Territory to further limit the movement of food to the *38th NVA Regiment*, known to be staged in base camps there.
16 July	Marine units, primarily of the 7th Marines, began Operation Pickins Forest south of the An Hoa in the Song Thu Bon Valley.
16 August	Operation Lien Valley was begun by 1st Battalion, 5th Marines (-) about 11 kilometers southwest of An Hoa.
20 August	A DOD study indicated that about three of 10 servicemen interviewed had used marjuana or other drugs.
30 August	Thirty South Vietnamese senators were elected in voting marked by terrorist attacks and charges of fraud. Forty-two civilians were killed.
September	By the end of the month, the 1st and 5th Marines and 2d Battalion, 7th Marines were the only maneuver units remaining in the field.
September	TAORs were realigned as 7th Marines and some combat and service support units stood down.
1 September	With the deactivation of all CAPs outside Quang Nam, XXIV Corps returned operational control of the CAF to III MAF.
5 September	The 5th Marines began shifting elements of its infantry regiments to assume responsibility of the 7th Marines' area of operations in the Que Son area, as the 7th Marines began preparations to stand down from combat operations.
21 September	The Combined Action Force headquarters in Chu Lai was deactivated, leaving only the 2nd CAG operating in Quang Nam Province.

The approximately 600 Marines and Navy corpsmen integrated their operations with 31 PF and three RF platoons distributed throughout Quang Nam.

1 October — In a ceremony attended by Lieutenant General McCutcheon, CG, III MAF; Lieutenant General Sutherland of XXIV Corps; Lieutenant General Lam of I Corps; and Major General Widdecke, CG, 1st Marine Division, the regimental colors of the 7th Marines were trooped for the last time in Vietnam. That same day the regimental command group departed Vietnam for Camp Pendleton, California.

8 October — MACV completed plans to redeploy another 40,000 troops by the end of the year, which would leave some 344,000 in Vietnam.

14 October — At the request of Colonel Clark V. Judge, Commander of the 5th Marines, the 1st MAW decentralized helicopter support by dispatching six CH-46Ds, four AH-1G gunships, one UH-1E command and control aircraft, and usually a CH-53 to LZ Baldy on a daily basis. The helicopter package, operating under the control of Colonel Judge, was provided to improve the regiment's mobility and tactical flexibility.

15 October — The last Marines left An Hoa, turning the base over to the South Vietnamese.

22 October — Employing the 51st ARVN Regiment, the 1st Ranger Group, the 2d and 3d Troops of the 17th Armored Cavalry Squadron, over 300 RF and PF platoons, the People's Self-Defense Force, and the national police in a province-wide offensive against the VC, Lieutenant General Lam launched Operation Hoang Dien, the I Corps commander's most ambitious, essentially South Vietnamese pacification operation to that date.

31 October — MACV promulgated the Allied Combined Campaign Plan for 1971. Reflecting the changing emphasis of the war, the plan emphasized the RVNAF's increasing assumption of tasks previously assigned the redeploying Americans.

2 November — A large construction effort got underway to repair damage caused by monsoon flood waters.

21 November — TG 79.4 was redesignated 31st Marine Amphibious Unit (31st MAU), no longer SLF Alpha.

23 November — Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird reported that a joint American force conducted an unsuccessful helicopter raid on Son Toy prisoner of war camp 20 miles west of Hanoi on 19 November. The prisoners had been moved some weeks before.

December — The 1st Marine Division, which had a strength of over 28,000 the previous January, had shrunk to some 12,500.

1 December — The 1st LAAM Battalion was deactivated in Twentynine Palms, California. The battalion was one of the first units to arrive in Vietnam in 1965.

3 December — American strength in Vietnam was down to 349,700, the lowest since 29 October 1966.

9 December	The Senior Marine Advisor, Colonel Francis W. Tief, relieved Captain Eugene I. Finke, USN, as commander of TG 116.1 at the Solid Anchor base in the Ca Mau peninsula.
10 December	President Nixon warned that if North Vietnamese forces increased the level of fighting in South Vietnam as American forces were withdrawn, he would begin bombing targets in North Vietnam again.
24 December	Lieutenant General Keith B. McCutcheon was relieved as Commanding General, III MAF by Lieutenant General Donn J. Robertson.

1971

1 January	RVNAF allies ceased to have Tactical Areas of Responsibility (TAORs). Instead, only the RVNAF had them, while allied units were assigned Tactical Areas of Interest (TAOIs), which generally encompassed the same areas as their previous TAORs. From then forward the ARVN assigned areas of responsibility to allied commands.
1-31 January	Enemy activity was in apparent decline. In January 1970, allied forces had sighted 4,425 enemy troops, but from September through December 1970 only 4,159 were spotted.
6 January	Secretary of Defense Laird said that Vietnamization was running ahead of schedule and that the combat mission of American troops would end the following summer.
23 January	CINCPac approved standing down ARG Bravo from 29 January-1 May 1971. ARG Alpha would remain on 120-hour reaction time during the period.
30 January	Phase I of Operation Lam Son 719 began with elements of the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mech), USA, advancing from FSB Vandegrift toward Khe Sanh. On 8 February the ARVN entered Laos to begin Phase II. The RVNAF units swept areas of operation from 7 to 16 March during Phase III and began Phase IV, the withdrawal, on 17 March. The last South Vietnamese troops exited Laos on 6 April.
3 February-10 March	During the RVNAF-coordinated Operation Hoang Dien 103, units of III MAF, 1st MAW, 2d ROKMC, 51st ARVN Regiment, 146th PF Platoon, 39th RF Company, and PSDF combed the Da Nang TAOR lowlands and lowland fringes, killing 330 VC/NVA, while the allies lost 46 killed, including two Americans.
8 February	President Thieu announced that South Vietnamese troops entered Laos in operation Lam Son 719. No American ground troops or advisors crossed the border.
12 February	Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) Alfa/31st Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) arrived off the coast of North Vietnam, 50 miles east of the City of Vinh. From then until 6 March the ARG/MAU con-

ducted daily amphibious and communications exercises in an effort to cause the North Vietnamese to divert forces to respond to a potential raid at Vinh while Lam Son 719 was ongoing.

17 February — The MACV commander directed that from 1 May to 30 June during Keystone Robin Charlie the entire 3d MAB would be redeployed.

2 March — Brigade 147, VNMC made a heliborne assault into Laos during Lam Son 719, at FSB Delta, and relieving ARVN forces operating there.

24 March — DOD announced that the North Vietnamese had begun moving long-range artillery into the westetn end of the DMZ.

29 March — An estimated two battalions of the *38th NVA Regiment* reinforced by two Viet Cong battalions, attacked Duc Duc district headquarters just southwest of An Hoa, killing 103 civilians and kidnapping 37, while destroying 1,500 homes.

14 April — III MAF relocated to Okinawa this date and 3d MAB was officially established in RVN.

15 April — The strength of 3d MAB on its activation was 1,322 Marine and 124 Navy officers and 13,359 Marine and 711 Navy enlisted men. The ground combat element was the 1st Marines and the air element consisted of two aircraft groups, MAG-11 and MAG-16. The MAB also included numerous combat support and service support units.

15 April — The last four CUPP squads of Company M, 3d Battalion, 1st Marines were deactivated, ending the CUPP program. In 18 months of existence, the CUPP program had accounted for 578 enemy killed while Marines lost 46 killed.

30 April — President Nixon welcomed home the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton.

30 April — At the end of April, 3d MAB included the following units: HQ, 3d MAB; RLT-1; 1/1; 2/1; 3/1; 1/11; Sub-Unit 1, 1st Anglico; MAG-11; VMA-311; Det, VMO-6; MAG-16; HML-367; HML-167; HMM-263; HMM-463.

14 April — Lieutenant General Robertson, Commanding General, III MAF, relocated to Camp Courtney, Okinawa. Major General Armstrong, CG, 1st MAW, assumed command of all units remaining in RVN, reporting to CG, XXIV Corps for operational control as CG, 3d MAB. Command of 1st MAW was passed to CG, 1st MAW (Rear) and Major General Widdecke, CG, 1st Marine Division relocated to MCB, Camp Pendleton, California, reporting to CG, FMFPac for operational control.

3-4 May — Marines from Quantico and Camp Lejeune were deployed in Washington, D.C. to assist the police in controlling anti-war protesters.

7 May — 3d MAB units ceased ground combat operations and fixed-wing aviation operations.

11 May — The 2d Combined Action Group headquarters was deactivated, signalling the end of Marine Corps pacification and civic action campaigns in Vietnam.

12 May Operation Imperial Lake ended in which 305 VC/NVA were killed while Marines had 24 killed.

4 June The 3d MAB turned over its last piece of real estate in Vietnam, Camp Books, to the U.S. Army.

9 June Lieutenant General W. G. Dolvin, USA, relieved Lieutenant General J. W. Sutherland, USA, as Commanding General, XXIV Corps.

21 June American troop strength in RVN was down to 244,900.

26 June The 3d MAB closed its headquarters.

27 June The 3d MAB was deactivated.

Appendix D

Medal of Honor Citations January 1970-June 1971

The President of the United States in the name of The Congress takes pride in presenting the MEDAL OF HONOR to

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS RAYMOND MICHAEL CLAUSEN
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 263, Marine Aircraft Group 16, First Marine Aircraft Wing, during operations against enemy forces in the Republic of Vietnam on 31 January 1970. Participating in a helicopter rescue mission to extract elements of a platoon which had inadvertently entered a minefield while attacking enemy positions, Private First Class Clausen skillfully guided the helicopter pilot to a landing in an area cleared by one of several mine explosions. With eleven Marines wounded, one dead, and the remaining eight Marines holding their positions for fear of detonating other mines, Private First Class Clausen quickly leaped from the helicopter and, in the face of enemy fire, moved across the extremely hazardous, mine-laden area to assist in carrying casualties to the waiting helicopter and in placing them aboard. Despite the ever-present threat of further mine explosions, he continued his valiant efforts, leaving the comparatively safe area of the helicopter on six separate occasions to carry out his rescue efforts. On one occasion while he was carrying one of the wounded, another mine detonated, killing a corpsman and wounding three other men. Only when he was certain that all Marines were safely aboard did he signal the pilot to lift the helicopter. By his courageous, determined and inspiring efforts in the face of the utmost danger, Private First Class Clausen upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service.

The President of the United States in the name of The Congress takes pride in presenting the MEDAL OF HONOR posthumously to

LANCE CORPORAL EMILIO ALBERT DE LA GARZA, JR.
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a machine gunner with Company E, Second Battalion, First Marines, First Marine Division, in the Republic of Vietnam on April 11, 1970. Returning with his squad from a night ambush operation, Lance Corporal De La Garza joined his platoon commander and another Marine in searching for two enemy soldiers who had been observed fleeing for cover toward a small pond. Moments later, he located one of the enemy soldiers hiding among the reeds and brush. As the three Marines attempted to remove the resisting soldier from the pond, Lance Corporal De La Garza observed him pull the pin on a grenade. Shouting a warning, Lance Corporal De La Garza placed himself between the other two Marines and the ensuing blast from the grenade, thereby saving the lives of his comrades at the sacrifice of his own. By his prompt and decisive action, and his great personal valor in the face of almost certain death, Lance Corporal De La Garza upheld and further enhanced the finest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

The President of the United States in the name of The Congress takes pride in presenting the MEDAL OF HONOR posthumously to

LANCE CORPORAL JAMES DONNIE HOWE
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a Rifleman with Company I, Third Battalion, Seventh Marines, First Marine Division during operations against enemy forces in the Republic of Vietnam. In the early morning hours of May 6, 1970, Lance Corporal Howe and two other Marines were occupying a defensive position in a sandy beach area fronted by bamboo thickets. Enemy sappers suddenly launched a grenade attack against the position, utilizing the cover of darkness to carry out the assault. Following the initial explosions of the grenades, Lance Corporal Howe and his two comrades moved to a more advantageous position in order to return suppressive fire. When an enemy grenade landed in their midst, Lance Corporal Howe immediately shouted a warning and then threw himself upon the deadly missile, thereby protecting the lives of the fellow Marines. His heroic and selfless action was in keeping with the finest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service. He valiantly gave his life in the service of his country.

The President of the United States in the name of The Congress takes ptide in presenting the MEDAL OF HONOR posthumously to

LANCE CORPORAL MIGUEL KEITH
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a machine gunner with Combined Action Platoon 1-2-3, III Marine Amphibious Force, operating in Quang Ngai Province, Republic of Vietnam. During the early morning of 8 May 1970, Lance Corporal Keith was seriously wounded when his platoon was subjected to a heavy ground attack by a greatly outnumbering enemy force. Despite his painful wounds, he ran across the fire-swept terrain to check the security of vital defense positions, and then, while completely exposed to view, proceeded to deliver a hail of devastating machine gun fire against the enemy. Determined to stop five of the enemy approaching the command post, he rushed forward, firing as he advanced. He succeeded in disposing of three of the attackers and in dispersing the remaining two. At this point, a grenade detonated near Lance Corporal Keith, knocking him to the ground and inflicting further severe wounds. Fighting pain and weakness from loss of blood, he again braved the concentrated hostile fire to charge an estimated twenty-five enemy soldiers who were massing to attack. The vigor of his assault and his well-placed fire eliminated four of the enemy while the remainder fled for cover. During this valiant effort, he was mortally wounded by an enemy soldier. By his courageous and inspiring performance in the face of almost overwhelming odds, Lance Corporal Keith contributed in large measure to the success of his platoon in routing a numerically superior enemy force, and upheld the finest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service.

The President of the United States in the name of The Congress takes pride in presenting the MEDAL OF HONOR to

STAFF SERGEANT ALLAN JAY KELLOGG, JR.
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a Platoon Sergeant with Company G, Second Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Marine Division, in connection with combat operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam on the night of March 11, 1970. Under the leadership of Gunnery Sergeant (then Staff Sergeant) Kellogg, a small unit from Company G was evacuating a fallen comrade when the unit came under a heavy volume of small arms and automatic weapons fire from a numerically superior enemy force occupying well-concealed emplacements in the surrounding jungle. During the ensuing fierce engagement, an enemy soldier managed to maneuver through the dense foliage to a position near the Marines, and hurled a hand grenade into their midst which glanced off the chest of Gunnery Sergeant Kellogg. Quick to act, he forced the grenade into the mud in which he was standing, threw himself over the lethal weapon, and absorbed the full effects of its detonation with his body, thereby preventing serious injury or possible death to several of his fellow Marines. Although suffering multiple injuries to his chest and his right shoulder and arm, Gunnery Sergeant Kellogg resolutely continued to direct the efforts of his men until all were able to maneuver to the relative safety of the company perimeter. By his heroic and decisive action in risking his own life to save the lives of his comrades, Gunnery Sergeant Kellogg reflected the highest credit upon himself and upheld the finest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

Appendix E

List of Reviewers

Marines

Gen Kenneth McLennan, USMC (Ret)

LtGen Leo J. Dulacki, USMC (Ret)
LtGen William K. Jones, USMC (Ret)
LtGen Herman Nickerson, Jr., USMC (Ret)
LtGen Donn J. Robertson, USMC (Ret)
LtGen Bernard E. Trainor, USMC (Ret)

MajGen Alan J. Armstrong, USMC (Ret)
MajGen George S. Bowman, Jr., USMC (Ret)
MajGen James R. Jones, USMC (Ret)
MajGen Marc A. Moore, USMC (Ret)
MajGen Roy E. Moss, USMC (Ret)
MajGen Kenneth L. Robinson, Jr., USMC
MajGen Herbert L. Wilkerson, USMC (Ret)

BGen George L. Bartlett, USMC (Ret)
BGen Robert F. Conley, USMC (Ret)
BGen John S. Grinalds, USMC
BGen Donald L. Humphrey, USMC (Ret)
BGen Alexander P. McMillan, USMC (Ret)
BGen Thurman Owens, USMC (Ret)
BGen Albert C. Pommerenk, USMC (Ret)
BGen Charles S. Robertson, USMC (Ret)
BGen Francis W. Tief, USMC (Ret)

Col Vincent A. Albers, Jr., USMC (Ret)
Col Richard F. Armstrong, USMC (Ret)
Col Richard B. Baity, USMC (Ret)
Col Robert E. Barde, USMC (Ret)
Col Richard S. Barry, USMC (Ret)
Col Edward O. Bierman, USMC (Ret)
Col Don H. Blanchard, USMC (Ret)
Col Miller M. Blue, USMC (Ret)
Col Clarence W. Boyd, Jr., USMC (Ret)
Col George M. Bryant, USMC (Ret)
Col Robert R. Calvert, USMC (Ret)
Col Marshall N. Carter, USMCR
Col Alphonse V. Castellana, USMC (Ret)
Col Don R. Christensen, USMC (Ret)
Col David A. Clement, USMC (Ret)
Col Gildo S. Codispoti, USMC (Ret)
Col Barry S. Colassard, USMC (Ret)
Col Rex C. Denny, Jr., USMC (Ret)
Col Edmund G. Derning, Jr., USMC (Ret)
Col Jack W. Dindinger, USMC (Ret)
Col James G. Dixon, USMC (Ret)
Col Lawrence R. Dorsa, USMC (Ret)
Col Sam A. Dressin, USMC (Ret)
Col James E. Fegley, USMC (Ret)
Col Phillip J. Fehlen, USMC
Col George C. Fox, USMC (Ret)
Col Jesse L. Gibney, USMC (Ret)
Col Walter F. Glowicki, USMC (Ret)
Col Robert E. Gruenler, USMC (Ret)
Col Max G. Halliday, USMC (Ret)
Col James E. Harrell, USMC (Ret)
Col Franklin A. Hart, Jr., USMC (Ret)
Col Neal E. Heffernan, USMC (Ret)
Col Frank X. Hoff, USMC (Ret)
Col Louis S. Hollier, Jr., USMC (Ret)
Col Forest J. Hunt, USMC (Ret)
Col Sanford B. Hunt, Jr., USMC (Ret)
Col Herschel L. Johnson, Jr., USMC (Ret)
Col Clark V. Judge, USMC (Ret)
Col James P. Kelly, USMC (Ret)
Col Robert D. King, USMC (Ret)
Col Ray G. Kummerow, USMC (Ret)
Col Robert L. La Mar, USMC (Ret)
Col Willis D. Ledeboer, USMC (Ret)
Col Frederick D. Leder, USMC (Ret)
Col Pierre L. LeFevre, USMC
Col Charles G. Little, USMC (Ret)
Col Verle E. Ludwig, USMC (Ret)
Col Warren E. McCain, USMC (Ret)
Col Laurence A. Marousek, USMC (Ret)
Col Karl N. Mueller, USMCR (Ret)
Col Donald J. Norris, USMC (Ret)
Col W. Hays Parks, USMCR
Col Robert L. Parnell, Jr., USMC (Ret)
Col Tom D. Parsons, USMC (Ret)
Col William C. Patton, USMC (Ret)
Col Clifford J. Peabody, USMC (Ret)
Col Robert H. Piehl, USMC (Ret)
Col Lewis E. Poggemeyer, USMC (Ret)
Col Edward D. Resnik, USMC (Ret)
Col Raymond E. Roeder, Jr., USMC (Ret)

Col Robert P. Rose, USMC (Ret)
Col Edwin M. Rudzis, USMC (Ret)
Col Dale E. Shatzer, USMC (Ret)
Col John D. Shoup, USMC (Ret)
Col James A. Sloan, USMC (Ret)
Col Albert C. Smith, Jr., USMC (Ret)
Col Lewis C. Street III, USMC (Ret)
Col William J. Titschfield, USMC
Col John J. Unterkofler, USMC (Ret)
Col Leon N. Utter, USMC (Ret)
Col Floyd H. Waldrop, USMC (Ret)
Col Anthony Walker, USMC (Ret)
Col Stephen G. Warren, USMC (Ret)
Col James R. Weaver, USMC (Ret)
Col Vonda Weaver, USMC (Ret)
Col William V. H. White, USMC (Ret)
Col Robert L. Willis, USMC (Ret)
Col Walter M. Winoski, USMC (Ret)
Col William M. Yeager, USMC (Ret)
Col Edwin M. Young, USMC (Ret)

LtCol Alan D. Albert, USMC (Ret)
LtCol James T. Bowen, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Frank M. Boyd, USMC (Ret)
LtCol John Colia, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Harlan C. Cooper, Jr., USMC (Ret)
LtCol Denver T. Dale III, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Claude M. Daniels, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Godfrey S. Delcuze, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Edmund H. Dowling, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Charles R. Dunbaugh, USMC (Ret)
LtCol William R. Fails, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Johan S. Gestson, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Leroy H. Gonzales, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Pieter L. Hogaboom, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Delos M. Hopkins, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Lawrence G. Karch, USMC
LtCol John J. Keenan, USMC (Ret)
LtCol William E. Keller, Jr., USMC
LtCol James C. Klinedinst, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Russell Lloyd, Jr., USMC (Ret)
LtCol David G. Mehargue, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Gilbert R. Meibaum, USMC
LtCol Charles M. Mosher, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Richard L. Prather, USMC (Ret)
LtCol James W. Rider, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Charles A. Rosenfeld, USMC (Ret)
LtCol David F. Seiler, USMC (Ret)
LtCol John J. Sheridan, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Morris S. Shimanoff, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Thomas H. Simpson, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Robert E. Wehrle, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Kenneth C. Williams, USMC (Ret)

Maj Gerald F. Baker, USMCR (Ret)
Maj Robert E. Burgess, USMC (Ret)
Maj Robert T. Himmerich, USMC (Ret)
Maj Edward J. Land, Jr., USMC (Ret)
Maj Dellas J. Weber, USMC (Ret)

SgtMaj Edgar R. Huff, USMC (Ret)

MSgt John F. Hate, USMC (Ret)

Army

Gen William C. Westmoreland, USA (Ret)
LtGen John R. Thurman III, USA (Ret)
LtGen John M. Wright, Jr., USA (Ret)
MajGen Lloyd B. Ramsey, USA (Ret)
Col John W. Chism, USA (Ret)
LtCol Warren E. Parker, USA (Ret)
LtCol Robert R. Rafferty, USA (Ret)

Navy

Adm Maurice F. Weisner, USN (Ret)
VAdm Walter D. Gaddis, USN (Ret)
RAdm Herbert S. Matthews, Jr., USN (Ret)
Capt Perry C. Alexander, USN (Ret)
Capt James G. Goode, USN, CHC
Capt Merideth H. Mead, USN (Ret)
Capt Tracy H. Wilder, USN (Ret)
Cdr John B. Fitzgerald, USN, CHC

Others

Mr. Thomas Harvey

Appendix F

Distribution of Personnel Fleet Marine Force, Pacific

(Reproduction of Status of Forces, 30 January 1970)

UNIT	NOTE	ASSIGNED STRENGTH *		STR RPT DATE **	DANANG		CHU LAI		PHU BAI		No I CTZ		OKINAWA		JAPAN		HAWAII		EASTPAC		OTHER	
HEADQUARTERS		USMC	USN		USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN
HQ, FMF, PAC																						
FMF, PAC	3	92	1	8MAY69													92	1				
H&S BN, FMF, PAC	3	1864	50	14MAY69													1864	50				
CAMP S. D. BUTLER		558		15JAN70									558									
CASUAL		171		15JAN70									171									
HOSPITALIZED	5	676		15JAN70											295						381	
HQ, V MEB																						
1ST CIVAFFGRP		82	4																82	4		
H&SCo, 5TH MEB		1331	48																1331	48		
HQ, FORTRPS, FMF PAC																						
HQCO, FORTRPS		273	27																273	27		
HQ, 1ST MAR BRIG																						
HQCO, 1ST MAR BRIG		252	26														252	26				
HQ, I MEF																						
HQ, 3D MARDIV																						
HQBN, 3DMARDIV		1532	56										1532	56								
HQ, III MAF																						
H&SCo, III MAF		1122	29		1122	29																
1ST CAG		518					518															
2D CAG		648			648																	
3D CAG		365							365													
4TH CAG		365									365											
HQ, 1ST MARDIV																						
HQBN, 1STMARDIV	3	2233	45		2184	45															49	
INFANTRY																						
1ST MARINES																						
HQ CO		268	9		268	9																
1ST BATTALION		1158	54		1158	54																
2D BATTALION		1137	58		1137	58																
3D BATTALION		1144	55		1144	55																
3D MARINES																						
HQ CO		331	7																331	7		
1ST BATTALION		1446	84														1446	84				
2D BATTALION		1312	50																1312	50		
3D BATTALION		1308	55																1308	55		
4TH MARINES																						
HQ CO		174	6										174	6								
1ST BATTALION		926	54										926	54								
2D BATTALION		924	52										924	52								
3D BATTALION		996	56										996	56								
5TH MARINES																						
HQ CO		352	9		352	9																
1ST BATTALION		1135	58		1135	58																
2D BATTALION		1122	57		1122	57																
3D BATTALION		1118	58		1118	58																
7TH MARINES																						
HQ CO		341	11		341	11																
1ST BATTALION		1168	57		1168	57																
2D BATTALION		1246	56		1246	56																
3D BATTALION		1026	46		1026	46																
9TH MARINES																						
HQ CO		372	11										372	11								
1ST BATTALION	1	1479	76																		1479	76
2D BATTALION	1	1612	80																		1612	80
3D BATTALION		983	64										983	64								
26TH MARINES																						
HQ CO		311	7		311	7																
1ST BATTALION		1184	53		1184	53																
2D BATTALION		1128	53		1128	53																
3D BATTALION		1128	55		1128	55																
ARTILLERY																						
11TH MARINES																						
HQ BTRY		479	8		479	8																
1ST BATTALION		621	18		621	18																
2D BATTALION		601	17		601	17																
3D BATTALION		605	17		605	17																
4TH BATTALION		561	11		561	11																

UNIT	NOTE	ASSIGNED STRENGTH *		STR RPT DATE **	DANANG		CHU LAI		PHU BAI		No I CTZ		OKINAWA		JAPAN		HAWAII		EASTPAC		OTHER	
		USMC	USN		USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN
12TH MARINES																						
HQ BTRY		210	13										210	13								
1ST BATTALION		910	21																1310	21		
2D BATTALION		720	22										720	22								
3D BATTALION		567	21										567	21								
4TH BATTALION		339	15										339	15								
1ST BN, 13TH MAR		1129	30		1129	30																
HQ BTRY, 1ST FAG		273	9		273	9																
1ST 175MM GUN BTRY		161	3		161	3																
3D 175MM GUN BTRY		153	3		153	3																
5TH 175MM GUN BTRY		256	7								256	7										
1ST 8" HOW BTRY		214	5								214	5										
2D 8" HOW BTRY		231	4		231	4																
1ST RECON CO (-) (REIN) (CADRE)																						
RECONNAISSANCE																						
[illegible]		795	30		795	30																
[illegible]		417	24										314	20					103	4		
[illegible]		149	7		149	7																
[illegible]		152	7								152	7										
ANTI-TANK																						
[illegible]	4																					
[illegible]	4																					
9A, 3D AT BN		105	4																105	4		
TANK																						
[illegible] TANK BN		843	23		843	23																
TANK CO		735	19										458	8					277	9		
AMTRAC																						
[illegible] AMTRAC BN		723	16										444	11					279	5		
3D AMTRAC BN		806	18		806	18																
[illegible] ASM MSHIP		94																	94			
ENGINEER																						
[illegible]		946	18		946	18																
[illegible]		692	15										501	14					191	1		
7TH ENGR BN		1054	24		1054	24																
9TH ENGR BN		1081	21				1081	21														
11TH ENGR BN		1065	15										512	13					553	2		
1ST [illegible]		207	2		207	2																
[illegible] (-)		149	1																149	1		
MOTOR TRANSPORT																						
[illegible]		422	7		422	7																
[illegible]		276	8										191	8					85			
9TH MT BN		398	11										232	11					166	1		
11TH MT BN		522	9		522	9																
COMMUNICATION																						
1 [illegible]		348			281								67									
9TH [illegible] MM (REIN)		989	13		989	13																
3D [illegible] MM BN (-)		413	9										413	9								
9TH COMM BN		1085	11										978	11					107			
1ST RADIO		110	4														110	4				
SHORE PARTY																						
[illegible] SP BN		542	21		542	21																
3D SP BN		413	27										280	13					133	14		
MILITARY POLICE																						
1ST MP BN		656	16		656	16																
3D MP BN		794	14		794	14																
SERVICE/SUPPORT																						
FLC, III MAF																						
HQ, FLC, 1ST FSR																						
HQ BN		1932	59		1932	59																
SUPPLY BN		1610	40		1610	40																
7TH SERVICE BN [illegible]		242			242																	
MAINT BN		1147	10		1147	10																
FLC, [illegible] TRANS BN		1548	26		1548	26																

UNIT	NOTE	ASSIGNED STRENGTH *		STR RPT DATE **	DANANG		CHU LAI		PHU BAI		No I CTZ		OKINAWA		JAPAN		HAWAII		EASTPAC		OTHER	
		USMC	USN		USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN
3D FSR																						
H&S BN		933	36										933	36								
SUPPLY BN		1041	22										1041	22								
MAINT BN		932											932									
5TH FSR																						
H&S BN		594	20																594	20		
SUPPLY BN		629	18																629	18		
MAINT BN		834																	834			
3D SERV BN (-)		2383	65										1403	43					980	22		
9TH SEP BULK FUEL CO		383																	383			
MEDICAL																						
1ST MED BN		195	291		195	291																
3D MED BN		173	378										90	308					83	62		
1ST HOSP CO		48	57		48	57																
1ST DENTAL CO			69			69																
3D DENTAL CO			80											80								
11TH DENTAL CO		4	66		4	66																
13TH DENTAL CO			30																30			
USMC		78,919			39,465		1,569		365		987		17,061		295		3,764		11,892		3,521	
USN			4,476			1,730		21		0		19		980		0		165		405		156
GROUND TOTAL		82,395			41,195		1,590		365		1,006		18,041		295		3,929		12,297		3,677	

AVIATION UNITS

HQ BGDN FMFPAC		61																	61			
1ST MAW																						
MWHG-1																						
HWHS-1		795	38		393	33									402	5						
MWTS-1		164			164																	
MWSS-1		260			260																	
MWSG-17																						
H&MS-17		726	20		726	20																
WERS-17		240			240																	
MACG-18																						
H&MS-18		234	10		234	10																
MABS-2		109	1		108	1																
MACS-4		328	3		328	3																
MAG-11																						
H&MS-11		641			641																	
MABS-11		473	23		473	23																
VMCJ-1		372			372																	
VMA(AW)-225		256	1		255	1																
VMA(AW)-242		268	1		266	1																
VMFA-542		288	1		286	1																
MAG-12																						
H&MS-12		435					435															
MABS-12		555	34				555	34														
MATCU-67		78					78															
VMA-211		166	1				166	1														
VMA-223		167	1				167	1														
VMA-311		167	1				167	1														
MAG-13																						
H&MS-13		451					451															
MABS-13		534	32				534	32														
VMFA-115		245	1				245	1														
VMFA-314		246	1				246	1														
VMFA-122		275	1				275	1														
MATCU-62		55					55															
MAG-16																						
H&MS-16		458			458																	
MABS-16		666	27		666	27																
MATCU-68		69			69																	
VMO-2		152			152																	
HML-167		250			250																	
HMM-364		211	1		211	1																
HMM-463		191	1		191	1																
HMM-263		228	1		228	1																
HMH-361		202	1		202	1																
HMM-161		208							208													
HMM-262		219	1						219	1												
HML-367		211	2						211	2												

AVIATION UNITS

UNIT	NOTE	ASSIGNED STRENGTH		STRENGTH RPT DATE	DANANG		CHU LAI		PHU BAI		No I CTZ		OKINAWA		JAPAN		HAWAII		EASTPAC		OTHER	
		USMC	USN		USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN
H[illegible] [illegible]N FMFPA		61															61					
1STMAW (REAR)																						
M[illegible]-1[illegible]																						
H&MS-15		558													558							
MABS-15		542	26												542	26						
MATCU-60		75													75							
VMFA-232		274	1												274	1						
VMFA-334		280	1												280	1						
VMA(AW)-533		268													268							
MACG-18 (REAR)																						
H&S-18 (REAR)		62													62							
MACS-8		232	3												232	3						
MASS-2		171	2												171	2						
MAG-36																						
H&MS-36		553											553									
MABS-36		477	12										477	12								
MATCU-66		44											44									
VMGR-152		431	5										431	5								
HMM-165	1	189	3																		189	3
HMH-164	1	189	5																		189	5
HMH-462		189	2										189	2								
VMO-6		213	4										213	4								
1ST BRIG																						
MAG-24																						
H&MS-24		455															455					
MABS-24		277	26														277	26				
MACS-2		187															187					
MATCU-70		35															35					
VMFA-212		263															263					
VMFA-235		255															255					
3D MAW																						
MWHG-3																						
H&HS-[illegible]		683	124																683	124		
MWF[illegible]-[illegible]		165																	165			
MWCS-3		263																	263			
[illegible]CRT[illegible]-10																						
H&[illegible]-10		266	2																266	2		
[illegible]MAT-102		206																	206			
[illegible]MT-103		182																	182			
MH[illegible]-30																						
H&[illegible]-30		371	1																371	1		
HMHT-30[illegible]		175	1																175	1		
HMMT-30[illegible]		207	1																207	1		
M[illegible]-33																						
H&M[illegible]-33		1017	2																1017	2		
MABS-33		419	3																419	3		
MATCU-65		62																	62			
VMCJ-3		405	1																405	1		
VMA-214		208																	208			
VMFA-531		306	1																306	1		
VMFA-323		10																	10			
VMFAT-101		468																	468			
MW[illegible]-[illegible]																						
H&M[illegible]-[illegible]		659	3																659	3		
[illegible]		253	1																253	1		
VM[illegible]R-352		377	1																377	1		
[illegible]-38																						
H&[illegible]-38		298	2																298	2		
MA[illegible]-1		292	2																292	2		
MA[illegible]-3		274																	274			
[illegible]		280	1																280	1		
[illegible] LAAM [illegible]		184																	184			
[illegible] LAAM [illegible]		766	16																766	16		

UNIT	NOTE	ASSIGNED STRENGTH *		STRENGTH RPT DATE **	DANANG		CHU LAI		PHU BAI		No I CTZ		OKINAWA		JAPAN		HAWAII		EASTPAC		OTHER	
		USMC	USN		USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN	USMC	USN
MAG-56																						
H&MS-56		461																	461			
MABS-56		423	2																423	2		
MATS-74		93																	93			
HMM-163		300																	300			
HML-267		393	5																393	5		
HMM-265		192																	192			
HMH-363		323																	323			
MATCU-75		53																	53			
USMC		29,091			7,363		3,374		638		0		1,907		2,864		1,533		11,034		378	
USN		461			124		72		3		0		23		38		26		167		8	
AVIATION TOTAL		29,552			7,487		3,446		641		0		1,930		2,902		1,559		11,201		386	

* UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, STRENGTHS AND LOCATION ARE THOSE REPORTED BY UNIT PERSONNEL STATUS REPORTS AND DO NOT REFLECT DAY-TO-DAY ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN PERIODS.
** UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, STRENGTH REPORT DATE IS 16JAN70.

RECAPITULATION OF FMFPAC PERSONNEL DISTRIBUTION

		ASSIGNED STRENGTH	DANANG	CHU LAI	PHU BAI	No I CTZ	OKINAWA	JAPAN	HAWAII	EASTPAC	OTHER
GROUND TOTAL →	USMC	78,919	39,465	1,569	365	987	17,061	295	3,764	11,892	3,521
	USN	3,476	1,730	21	0	19	980	0	165	405	156
AVIATION TOTAL →	USMC	29,091	7,363	3,374	638	0	1,907	2,864	1,533	11,034	378
	USN	461	124	72	3	0	23	38	26	167	8
GRAND TOTAL →	USMC	108,013	46,828	4,943	1,003	987	18,968	3,159	5,297	22,926	3,899
	USN	3,937	1,854	93	3	19	1,003	38	191	572	164

NOTES:
1. FIGURES IN "OTHER" ASSIGNED TO SLF'S.
2. FIGURES IN "OTHER" ASSIGNED TO VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN RVN.
3. PERSONNEL IN "OTHER" ARE ASSIGNED TO IT, ITT, SSC, CI TEAMS, RED EYE AND NUCLEAR ORDNANCE PLATOONS.
4. STRENGTH INCLUDED IN 1ST AND 30 TANK BATTALIONS.
5. THE 597 PERSONNEL LISTED IN "OTHER" ARE HOSPITALIZED AT LOCATIONS OTHER THAN OKINAWA, BUT ARE CARRIED ON THE ROLLS OF CASUAL COMPANY, MCB, CAMP BUTLER
6. AT SUBIC

* UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, STRENGTHS AND LOCATION ARE THOSE REPORTED BY UNIT PERSONNEL STATUS REPORTS AND DO NOT REFLECT DAY-TO-DAY ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN PERIODS.

** UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, STRENGTH REPORT DATE IS 16JAN70.

Appendix G

Distribution of Personnel Fleet Marine Force, Pacific

(Reproduction of Status of Forces, 21 April 1971)

UNIT	NOTE	UNIT COMMANDER	LOCATION	STRENGTH USMC	STRENGTH USN	MAJOR EQUIPMENT
FMFPAC						
HQ FMFPAC		LTGEN W. K. JONES	HAWAII			
H&SBN		COL R. G. LAUFFER	CAMP SMITH	1043	90	
HQ SQDN		LTCOL C. E. DORFFELD	KANEOHE	61		2/UH-34D, 2/US-2B, 1/C-47J
11TH CIT		CAPT K. W. CLEM				
DET 2, 21ST DENTAL CO		CAPT M.R. HAMILTON (USN)	CAMP SMITH		8	
1ST ANGLICO		MAJOR J. B. LEONARD, JR	KANEOHE	154	2	
SU 1, 1ST ANGLICO		LTCOL E. E. SHOULTS	MACV SAIGON	180	9	
SU 2, 1ST RADIO BN		MAJOR L. K. RUSSELL	KANEOHE	128		
TOTAL HQ FMFPAC				1566	109	
WESTPAC						
HQ 3D MAB		MAJGEN A. J. ARMSTRONG	DANANG			
H&SCO		LTCOL W. J. SPIESEL		397	13	2/155 HOW TO, 3 /81 MORT
1ST RADIO BN (-)		LTCOL E. D. RESNIK	STANDING DOWN	36		
COMM SPT CO, 7TH COMM		MAJOR R. T. HIMMERICH	DANANG	338		
2D CAG		LTCOL J. J. TOLNAY	HOI AN	557	35	
5TH CIT		1STLT J. L. ALLINGHAM	DANANG	13		
TOTAL HQ 3D MAB				1341	48	
HQBN, 1ST MARDIV (-)	3	LTCOL R. E. WEHRLE	STANDING DOWN	119		
RLT-1						
1ST IT		WO F. W. SCHAFFER	DANANG	2		
7TH IT		1STLT R. L. HOMSEY	STANDING DOWN	2		
3D CIT		CAPT W. J. KNIPPER	DANANG	18		
3D ITT		CAPT M. R. LAMB		14		
13TH ITT		1STLT C.H. ANDERSON, JR.	STANDING DOWN	2		
2D SSCT		1STLT J. E. MANCUSO		2		
CO A, 1ST ENGR BN		MAJOR J. B. DIXON	DANANG	271	2	
1ST MED BN (-)		CDR W.A.ELLIOT III (USN)	STANDING DOWN	33	269	
11TH MT BN		LTCOL C. A. ROSEFELD		60	10	
CO A, 1ST MT BN		CAPT P. MC CANN	DANANG	96	1	
DET, HQ BTRY, 11TH MAR				49		

UNIT	NOTE	UNIT COMMANDER	LOCATION	STRENGTH USMC	STRENGTH USN	MAJOR EQUIPMENT
CO C (REIN), 1ST SP BN		MAJOR R. W. SWEET, JR		95		
CO A, 1ST RECON BN(REIN)		MAJOR H. C. COOPER, JR.		218	16	
DET, 1ST FORCE RECON BN						
1ST MARINES		COL P. X. KELLEY	DANANG			
HQCO		CAPT H. W. GARDNER		264	8	3/106MM RR
1ST BN		LTCOL R. P. ROSE	STANDING DOWN	1029	68	9/106MM RR, 10/81 MORT
2D BN		LTCOL R. E. MOSS	DANANG	1137	63	8/106MM RR, 10/81 MORT
3D BN		LTCOL M. A. MOORE		1195	56	8/106MM RR, 8/81 MORT
1ST BN, 11TH MAR		LTCOL B. F. OGDEN	DANANG	786	18	6/M-30 MORT, 18/105 HOW TD, 1/81 MORT
3D 8" BTRY		MAJOR W. J. McCALLUM		243	5	1/M51, 6/8" HOW SP
TOTAL RLT-1				5635	517	
FLC		BGEN J. R. JONES	DANANG			14/105 HOW TD, 1/155 HOW SP, 1/155 HOW TD, 2/106MM RR, 11/81 MORT
H&SBN		LTCOL D. J. BURGER		762	47	
MAINT BN		LTCOL W. F. SHEEHAN		497	13	2/M51 VTR
SUPPLY BN		COL C. F. LANGLEY		810	32	
1ST MP BN		LTCOL J. COLIA		675	10	3/81 MORT
CO A, 7TH ENGR BN		MAJOR G. R. MEIBAUN		262		
TOTAL FLC				3006	102	
MAG-11/MAG-16						
DET, H&HS-1		MAJOR L. F. GAGNON	STANDING DOWN	118		
DET, MWFS-1		MAJOR J. R. GRIFFIN		42		
DET, MMCS-1		MAJOR R. S. KAYE		38		
DET, 3D SSCT		CAPT D. R. PHELPS		1		
DET, 11TH FORCE DENTAL CO (-) (REIN)		CDR W.P. ARMSTRONG (USN)		1	60	
DET, H&HS-18		MAJOR L. E. OBENHAUS	STANDING DOWN	20		
MAG-11		COL A. C. POMMERENK	DANANG			
H&MS-11		LTCOL A.R. ANDERSON, JR.		603		2/C-117D, 3/TA-4F
MABS-11		LTCOL C. L. COMFORT		567	22	
VMA-311		LTCOL J. T. HAGEN		208	1	24/A-4E
VMA(AW)-225		LTCOL J.A. MANZIONE, JR.	STANDING DOWN	289	1	12/A-6A
DET, VMO-6		LTCOL E. P. JANZ	DANANG	53		4/OV-10A
MASS-3		LTCOL W. C. SIMANIKAS	DANANG	223	1	

UNIT	NOTE	UNIT COMMANDER	LOCATION	STRENGTH USMC	STRENGTH USN	MAJOR EQUIPMENT
MAG-16		COL L. C. STREET III	MARBLE MOUTAIN			
H&MS-16		MAJOR C. D. SILARD, JR.		490		5/CH-46D
MABS-16		LTCOL J. M. DEAN		665	28	
HML-167		LTCOL R. J. BLANC		207		23/UH-1E
HML-367		LTCOL L. E. REESE		241	1	22/AH-1G, 4/AH-1J
HMM-262		LTCOL F. K. WEST, JR.		248	1	22/CH-46D
HMM-263		LTCOL L. K. KECK		197	1	20/CH-46D
HMH-463		LTCOL T. S. REAP		229	1	18/CH-53D
MATCU-68		MAJOR B. D. COLLINS		61		
TOTAL MAG-11/MAG-16				4501	117	
TOTAL 3D MAB				14,483	784	
III MAF		LTGEN D. J. ROBERTSON	CAMP COURTNEY			
HQCO				185		
TOTAL HQCO III MAF				185		
3D MAR DIV (-) (REIN)		MAJGEN L. METZGER	CAMP COURTNEY			
HQ BN		COL W. D. POWERS		1419	37	
17TH ITT		1STLT G. H. JOHNSON, JR.	CAMP HANSEN	9		
1ST SSCT		CAPT T. L. STROHHECKER	CAMP COURTNEY	7		
7TH ITT		CAPT A. R. ARBISI	CAMP HANSEN	10		
15TH ITT		1STLT B. R. KRAMER		8		
11TH ITT			ENR CAMP HANSEN			
4TH MARINES		COL R. T. HANIFIN, JR.	CAMP HANSEN			
HQCO		MAJOR R. F. LUSK		211	6	
1ST BN		LTCOL P. M. JOHNSON		1088	32	8/106MM RR, 8/81 MORT
2D BN		LTCOL W. H. NUTLY	BLT	1092	42	8/106MM RR, 8/81 MORT
3D BN	1	LTCOL A. J. CASTELLANA	CAMP HANSEN	1072	34	8/106MM RR, 8/81 MORT
9TH MARINES		COL J. V. McLERNAN	CAMP SCHWAB			
HQCO		CAPT M. H. CRAFTON		202	5	
1ST BN	2	LTCOL F.W.M.WOODROM, JR.	31ST MAU	1047	37	8/106MM RR, 8/81 MORT
2D BN		LTCOL F.J. JOHNSON, JR.	CAMP SCHWAB	1164	30	5/106MM RR, 8/81 MORT
3D BN		LTCOL B. S. SNELL		937	30	8/106MM RR, 8/81 MORT
12TH MARINES		COL J. J. SNYDER	CAMP FUJI			
HQ BTRY (-)		CAPT D. J. LABOISSIERE		188	6	4/155 HOW TD
2D BN	16	MAJOR W. K. KRAMER		491	12	18/105 HOW TD
3D BN	16	MAJOR C. A. HENRY		477	11	18/105 HOW TD
4TH BN (-) (REIN)		LTCOL K. G. PATTERSON		366	11	18/155 HOW TD
3D PLAT, 1ST 8" HOW BTRY	4					2/8" HOW TD
3D MED BN (-)		LCDR K. W. GRAY (USN)	CAMP HANSEN	117	160	

UNIT	NOTE	UNIT COMMANDER	LOCATION	STRENGTH USMC	STRENGTH USN	MAJOR EQUIPMENT
3D DENTAL CO		CAPT W. J. KENNEDY, (USN) JR.	CAMP COURTNEY	5	67	
3D SERV BN (-)		COL D. J. HUNTER	CAMP HANSEN	719	17	
3D TANK BN (-)		LTCOL C. R. STIFFLER		650	10	50/M48 TANKS, 8/M67 TANKS 4/M51 VTR
3D MT BN (-)		MAJOR J. F. SHERRY, JR.	CAMP SCHWAB	185	6	
3D RECON BN (-)		LTCOL T. R. STUART		322	22	
3D ENGR BN (-) (REIN)		LTCOL D. D. CREWS, JR.		750	9	
CO D (REIN), 7TH ENGR		MAJOR D. R. COMER	CAMP HAGUE			
3D SP BN (-)		LTCOL R. L. ANDERSON		322	23	
1ST AMTRAC BN (-)		LTCOL J. G. BUCKMAN	CAMP SCHWAB	580	11	99/LVTP-5, 10/LVTP-5 COMD, 3/LVTR
7TH COMM BN (-)		LTCOL M. N. McCOURTY		453	6	
9TH MT BN (-)		MAJOR J. R. TRAYLOR	CAMP HANSEN	270	7	
1ST HOSPITAL CO (CADRE)		LT H. D. CASH (USN)		28	13	
TOTAL 3D MAR DIV				14,209	644	
3D FSR		COL R. E. ROEDER, JR.	CAMP FOSTER			
H&SBN		LTCOL J. B. HARRIS		814	28	
SUPPLY BN		LTCOL J. N. FRIBERG		1022	27	
MAINT BN		CAPT C. W. SHIVER		44		
TOTAL 3D FSR				2723	55	
1ST MAW (JAPAN)		BGEN R. F. CONLEY	IWAKUNI			
MWHG-1 (-)		LTCOL G. H. BUCKNER II		791		
H&HS-1 (-)		LTCOL P. S. FRAPPOLLO		821	31	
MWFS-1 (-)		MAJOR J. R. GRIFFIN		141		
MWCS-1 (-)		MAJOR R. S. KAYE		205		
MACG-18 (-)		COL C. T. WESTCOTT	IWAKUNI			
H&HS-18 (-)		CAPT F. A. TOVAL		84		
11TH FORCE DENTAL CO (-)		LCDR G. N. OATS (USN)				
3D SSCT (-)						
MAG-15		COL R. R. MILLER	IWAKUNI			
H&MS-15		MAJOR M. P. CADY		473		4/TA-4F
MABS-15		MAJOR L. K. GRISSETT		310	12	
MASS-2 (-)		LTCOL T. G. DAVIS		138		
VMFA-232		LTCOL J. S. ROSENTHAL	IWAKUNI	262	1	13/F-4J
VMFA-115		LTCOL R. R. POWELL		290		10/F-4B
MATCU-60		1STLT J. W. LEFLAR		42		
7TH CIT		WO J. A. CANONICO		13		
MAG-12		COL R. L. McELROY	IWAKUNI			
H&MS-12		MAJOR W. A. McINTYRE		481		6/TA-4F, 2/A-4E

UNIT	NOTE	UNIT COMMANDER	LOCATION	STRENGTH USMC	STRENGTH USN	MAJOR EQUIPMENT
MABS-12		LTCOL J. L. BRIEFER		320	23	
VMA-211	17	LTCOL D. G. GASCOIGNE	CUBI PT	197	2	19/A-4E
VMA(AW)-533		LTCOL G. L. RUTLEDGE	IWAKUNI	230	1	11/A-6A
VMCJ-1		LTCOL C. A. HOUSEMAN		350	1	6/EA-6A, 7/RF-4B
MATCU-62		1STLT W. F. HAIZLIP		41		
SU 1, H&MS-12						
TOTAL 1ST MAW (JAPAN)				4368	71	
1ST MAW (OKINAWA)			OKINAWA			
MAG-36		COL R. J. ZITNIK	FUTEMA			
H&MS-36		LTCOL R. E. SKINNER		475		14/CH-46D, 5/CH-53D
MABS-36		MAJOR B. C. DARR		477	19	
MATCU-66		CAPT W. S. ROGERS		36		
MACS-8		LTCOL M. S. JOLLY, JR.		268	1	
HMM-164		LTCOL A. J. KETTERING		204	1	9/CH-46D
HMM-165	2	LTCOL H. M. HERTHER	31ST MAU	256	4	14/CH-46D, 3/CH-53D, 3/UH-1E
HMM-462		LTCOL R. E. DYER	FUTEMA	190		14/CH-53D
VMO-6		A. N. BLOOM		172		10/OV-10A, 12/UH-1E
VMGR-152		LTCOL R. W. DUPHINEY		314	1	9/KC-130F
DET, MASS-2						
MWSG-17		COL T. E. MULVIHILL	IWAKUNI			
H&MS-17		LTCOL E. W. GILBERT		400	6	7/C-117D, 3/C-54/Q/R/S
WERS-17 (-)		MAJOR W. T. SINNOTT		182		
SU 1, WERS-17		WO E. Q. HICKS		39		
TOTAL 1ST MAW (OKINAWA)				2983	32	
TOTAL 1ST MAW				7351	103	
TOTAL III MAF				24,468	802	
TOTAL WESTPAC				38,951	1588	
EASTPAC						
I MAF		MAJGEN C. F. WIDDECKE	CAMPEN			
H&SCO						
1ST MAR DIV (-) (REIN)		MAJGEN C. F. WIDDECKE	CAMPEN			
PROV HQBN, 5TH MAB, 1STMARDIV		COL R. N. DURHAM				
H&SCO, 5TH MAB, 1STMARDIV		MAJOR R. A. ANDERSON		1444	19	
1ST CIT		CAPT B. B. VORONIN		20		
5TH ITT		CAPT F. L. STULZ		11		
9TH ITT		CAPT L. J. JANSEN		10		
19TH ITT		CAPT A. D. BREWIN		9		
23D ITT		CAPT R. D. TOMLIN		13		
25TH ITT		CAPT H. K. LEE		14		
13TH CIT (CADRE)		1STLT W. C. LANTZ				
21ST ITT		CAPT R. R. WELPOTT		9		

UNIT	NOTE	UNIT COMMANDER	LOCATION	STRENGTH USMC	STRENGTH USN	MAJOR EQUIPMENT
9TH SSCT			CAMPEN	9		
SENSOR CONTROL & MGMT PLAT		CWO A. L. SELLECK, JR.		26		
DET, HQBN, 1ST MARDIV(CAIRE)			CAMPEN			
1ST CIVIL AFFAIRS GROUP (CAIRE)		MAJOR W. T. MACY		189	7	
COMM SPT CO, 9TH COMM BN		MAJOR R. K. MILLER		290		
3D MARINES (CAIRE)		LTCOL K. L. CHRISTENSEN	CAMPEN			
HQCO (CAIRE)		1STLT B. C. IFFT		166	19	
2D BN (CAIRE)		CAPT R. F. KEHRES		82		8/106MM RR, 8/81 MORT
3D BN (CAIRE)		MAJOR D. J. O'CONNOR		81		8/106MM RR, 8/81 MORT
5TH MARINES		COL C. V. JUDGE	CAMPEN			
HQCO		1STLT R. E. CAMPBELL		105	6	2/81 MORT
1ST BN		LTCOL F. A. HART, JR	ENR CONUS	174	1	9/106MM RR, 8/81 MORT
2D BN		LTCOL T. M. HAMLIN	CAMPEN	260	16	8/106MM RR, 8/81 MORT
3D BN		LTCOL H. L. JOHNSON, JR.		176	1	5/106MM RR, 8/81 MORT
7TH MARINES		COL A. A. MONTI	CAMPEN			
HQCO		CAPT W. O. MOORE, JR.		189	7	8/106MM RR, 8/81 MORT
1ST BN (CAIRE)		MAJOR R. C. HALL		133	7	2/106MM RR
2D BN		LTCOL R. R. BURRITT		1003	42	8/106MM RR, 8/81MORT
3D BN		LTCOL R. J. MILLE		1013	42	8/106MM RR, 8/81MORT
11TH MARINES (-) (REIN)		COL E. M. RUDZIS	CAMPEN			
HQ BTRY (-)		MAJOR G. L. YENERALL		222	9	
2D BN (-)		MAJOR C. K. MC AFEE		75		6/M-30 MORT, 6/155 HOW SP, 8/106MM RR
3D BN (REIN)	25	LTCOL B. F. STEWART		494	18	1/M51 VTR, 12/105 HOW TD 6/155 HOW TD
1ST BN (-),12THMAR (CAIRE)		MAJOR L. E. KOLEBER		80	3	
1ST RECON BN (-)		LTCOL B. E. TRAINOR		40		
CO C,(REIN), 3D RECON BN		CAPT J. W. PARRISH		76	2	
CO D, 1ST RECON BN (CAIRE)		1STLT A. K. ANDERSON				
1ST FORCE RECON CO (-) (CAIRE)		1STLT J. G. BAKER III		41	1	
CO A(-), 3D RECON BN		1STLT A. N. LAW				
1ST TANK BN	18	MAJOR G. E. BERBAUM		502	13	15/M103 TK, 47/M48 TK, 4/M51 VTR, 7/M67 TK
3D AMTRAC BN	19	MAJOR D. W. MAILLER		462	17	6/LVTE-1, 72/LVTP-5 8/LVTP-5 COMD, 3/LVTR
7TH MT BN (REIN)	13	LTCOL J. J. DOWD, JR.		191	4	
CO B (-)(REIN), 3D MT BN		1STLT J. C. HERING		49	1	
CO B (REIN), 9TH MT BN		1STLT R. F. WILLIAMS		75		
1ST MT BN (-)		LTCOL A. B. TALBOTT		77		
CO C, 1ST MT BN		CAPT M. A. BELEY		92	1	
1ST SP BN (-) (REIN)	12	LTCOL T. F. GRAY		246	17	
CO B (-) (REIN), 3D SP BN (CAIRE)		1STLT J. O. ALBER				
7TH ENGR BN (-) (REIN)	11	LTCOL J. P. KRAYNAK		367	14	
1ST BRIDGE CO (CAIRE)		1STLT D. N. TAYLOR		69		
1ST ENGR BN (-)		LTCOL D. E. BENSTEAD		21		

UNIT	NOTE	UNIT COMMANDER	LOCATION	STRENGTH USMC	STRENGTH USN	MAJOR EQUIPMENT
CO B (-)(REIN), 3D ENGR BN		1STLT L. H. PROSSER		81	2	
1ST SERV BN	10	COL G. K. REID		786	22	
CO C (-) (REIN), 3D MED BN (CAIRE)		LT D. B. COLLIDGE (USN)				
CO C, 1ST MED BN (CAIRE)		LT(JG) L. A. DAVIS (USN)		23	50	
3D HOSPITAL CO		LT W. L. NICHOLS (USN)		38	34	
1ST DENTAL CO (-)		CAPT J. J. LYONS (USN)		5	43	
7TH SEP BULK FUEL CO (CAIRE)						
9TH SEP BULK FUEL CO (CAIRE)						
1ST SEARCHLIGHT BTRY (CAIRE)						
TOTAL 1ST MARDIV (-) (REIN)				9,380	433	
TOTAL 1 MAF				9,380	433	
OTHER EASTPAC						
FORCE TROOPS FMFPAC		BGEN C. W. HOFFMAN	29 PALMS			
H&SCO		MAJOR E. L. ROTTSOLK		190	24	
NOF, 1ST FSR		1STLT W. W. STEELE		25		
NOF, 5TH FSR		CAPT T. R. GERIES		21		
9TH COMM BN (-)		LTCOL D. J. GARRETT		360	12	
17TH CIT		CAPT A. G. WILSON		19		
21ST DENTAL CO (-)		CAPT G. W. WALTER (USN)		2	17	
1ST FAG		LTCOL R. O. GILLICK	29 PALMS	19		
HQ BTRY		1STLT G. R. MABRY		180	13	
4TH BN, 11TH MAR		LTCOL J. A. HAMILTON		147	2	16/155 HOW SP, 8/105 HOW TD
1ST 8" HOW BTRY SP		MAJ L. J. SZAFRANSKI, JR		107		1/M51 VTR, 4/8" HOW SP
CO A (REIN), 11TH ENGR BN		CAPT P. A. PANKEY		127		
1ST 175MM GUN BTRY SP		1STLT J. P. GROSSCUP		26		1/M51 VTR, 6/175MM GUN
3D 175MM GUN BTRY SP		CAPT D. L. ROSENBERG		56		1/M51 VTR, 6/175MM GUN
TOTAL FOR TRPS, FMFPAC				1,279	68	
1ST FSR		COL H. C. REED	CAMPEN			
H&SBN		MAJOR R. E. JOHNSON		346	24	
SUPPLY BN		MAJOR R. J. WEBB		385	18	
MAINT BN		MAJOR A. A. MC VITTY		419		2/LVTR, 2/M51 VTR
TOTAL 1ST FSR				1150	42	
3D MAW		BGEN L. E. BROWN	EL TORO			
MAWG-3		COL G. L. LILLICH				
H&HS-3 (-)		MAJOR P. J. VOGEL		645	115	
6TH CIT		CAPT W. C. HOWEY		16		
4TH SSCT		CAPT H. G. WHITE		8		
MWFS-3		MAJOR J. S. LOOP		113		
MWCS-3		MAJOR G. P. HOWLE		211		
SU 1, H&HS-3		COL L. J. STEIN		8		

UNIT	NOTE	UNIT COMMANDER	LOCATION	STRENGTH USMC	STRENGTH USN	MAJOR EQUIPMENT
MWSG-37		COL R. A. SAVAGE	EL TORO			
H&HS-37 (-)		MAJOR L. K. WARN		472	2	3/C-117D, 1/C-54P, 1/C-54Q
SU 1, H&MS-37		MAJOR H. C. IVY, JR.		51		
WERS-37		LTCOL M. [illegible]		228		
VMGR-352		[illegible] M. [illegible] MANN		282	2	8/KC-130F
MACG-38		[illegible] J. W. [illegible]	[illegible] TORO			
H&HS-38 (-)		MA[illegible] [illegible] WAYMIR[illegible]		245		
SU 1, H&HS-38		MAJOR [illegible] HANEY		63		
2D LAAM BN	20	MAJOR L. A. SOLLBERGER	29 PALMS	619	7	
1ST REDEYE PLATOON		1STLT K. E. ROWE	EL TORO	36		
3D REDEYE PLATOON		2DLT [illegible] B. DOWLING, JR.		34		
MACS-7		LTCOL J. O. GREGERSON	CAMPEN	228		
MACS-1 (-)		MAJOR W. H. ALLEN	YUMA	210	1	
NWS, SU 1, MACS-1		CAPT R. P. PITTS		70		
DET A, 2D LAAM BN	21	MAJOR A. D. GLAD				
MACS-4 (CADRE)		MAJOR G. S. PRESCOTT	EL TORO	38		
MAG-13		COL O. R. DAVIS	EL TORO			
H&MS-13		LTCOL C. C. NEWMARK		588	1	23/F-4B, 4/TA-4F, 9/A-6A
MABS-13		MAJOR R. L. BAINBRIDGE		494	2	
VMA-214		LTCOL R. J. REID		155		10/A-4E
VMA-223		LTCOL J. W. LAZZO		121	1	9/A-4F
VMA(AW)-242		LTCOL M. S. NEWBILL		85	1	2/A-6A
VMFA-314		MAJOR A. G. BARTEL		17		
VMFA-323		LTCOL D. L. WALDVOGEL		183		14/F-4B
VMFA-531		LTCOL R. HUTCHINSON		238	1	16/F-4B
VMCJ-3		LTCOL M. W. DINNAGE		265	1	10/RF-4B
MATCU-65		1STLT R. D. ANDERSON		43		
MATCU-67		1STLT J. R. HANCOCK		17		
MATCU-77 (CADRE)						
13TH FORCE DNETAL CO		CAPT J. R. EVANS (USN)			37	
VMFA-334		MAJOR J. K. KRUTHERS		1		
MAG-56		COL M. B. PORTER	SANTA ANA			
H&MS-56 (-)		LTCOL G. H. DUNN		343		19/CH-53A
SU 1, H&MS-56		MAJOR G. W. LEE	CAMPEN	105		
MABS-56		LTCOL B. G. WILKISON	SANTA ANA	378		
MATCU-74		CAPT G. V. BROWN		38		
MATCU-75		CAPT P. D. HAYNES	CAMPEN	28		
HML-267		LTCOL J. M. MORIARTY		250	4	12/OV-10A, 19/UH-1E
HMM-161		LTCOL B. T. LADD	SANTA ANA	187		22/CH-46D
HMM-163		LTCOL F. A. MATHEWS		205	1	18/CH-46F

UNIT	NOTE	UNIT COMMANDER	LOCATION	STRENGTH USMC	STRENGTH USN	MAJOR EQUIPMENT
HMH-361		LTCOL E. W. RAWLINS		196		10/CH-53A
HMH-363		LTCOL A. F. RIBBECK, JR.		187		14/CH-53A
VMO-2 (-)			ENROUTE CONUS			
MHTG-30		COL A. F. GARROTTO	SANTA ANA			
H&MS-30		MAJOR D. G. DUNLAP		250	1	9/CH-46F, 4/CH-53A
HMHT-301		MAJOR D. A. DALRYMPLE		112	1	8/CH-53A
MMMT-302		LTCOL P. L. MOREAU		156	1	13/CH-46F
MCCRTG-10		COL R. B. SINCLAIR	YUMA			
H&MS-10		MAJOR G. R. CALLISON		446	5	
VMFAT-101		LTCOL T. R. MOORE		411	1	18/F-4B
VMAT-102		LTCOL R. D. REID		292		29/A-4E
VMT-103		MAJOR B. H. FREEMAN		233	2	20/TA-4F
DET, H&MS-11 (-)			ENROUTE CONUS			
DET, H&MS-13 (-)						
TOTAL 3D MAW				9601	187	
TOTAL OTHER EASTPAC				12,030	297	
TOTAL EASTPAC				21,410	730	
MIDPAC						
1ST MARINE BRIGADE		BGEN V. A. ARMSTRONG	KANEOHE			
H&SCO		MAJOR R. F. HALLETT		274	17	
1ST ITT		CAPT T. E. NADOLSKI		16		
DET 1, 21ST DENTAL CO		CDR J. D. CRAWFORD (USN)			14	
1ST BN (REIN), 3D MAR	22	LTCOL H. W. WAHFELD		656	54	6/105 HOW TD, 8/106MM RR, 8/81 MORT
CO A, 9TH ENGR BN		CAPT R. I. EDWARDS		121		
CO A (REIN), 1ST AMTRAC BN		CAPT K. R. BURNS		193		44/LVTP-5, 3/LVTP-5 COMD, 1/LVTR
PROV SERV BN		LTCOL R. E. NICHOLSON		234		
BTRY "A", 1STBN, 12TH MAR	14					
MAG-24		COL R. E. CAREY	KANEOHE			
H&MS-24		LTCOL C. L. PHILLIPS		457		5/CH-46A, 2/TA-4F, 1/C-117D
MABS-24		LTCOL W. R. LEDBETTER, JR		381	29	
MATCU-70		CAPT O. F. GOUR, JR.		51		
VMFA-122		LTCOL L. FURSTENBERG		154		15/F-4B
VMFA-212		LTCOL J. W. MOORE		216		17/F-4J
VMFA-235		LTCOL F. L. FARRELL, JR.		225		16/F-4J
MACS-2		LTCOL P. L. ELLIOTT		200		
TOTAL 1ST MARINE BRIGADE				3178	114	
TOTAL FMFPAC				65,105	2539	

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Key: **boldface type** = illustration; *n* = footnote; *ff* = following pages

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